

The Arc Minnesota's Vision for Services & Supports

The Arc Minnesota's vision for the future is that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) will have an annual budget allocation; will have clear guidelines about how they can spend it; will know how they will be held accountable; and, with appropriate support, will then be able to design their own services and supports to best meet their needs, goals, and dreams.

The service and support system for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) is going through a major evolution. These changes will impact how persons live, work, and play. We want to ensure that members of The Arc understand both the challenges and opportunities inherent in these changes. This paper is an attempt to begin this necessary, ongoing dialogue.

Services are Evolving

Minnesota has:

- 3,600 individuals on the Developmental Disabilities Waiver waiting list.
- Increasing numbers of persons with disabilities and state budgets that are not growing enough to meet their needs with our traditional provision of services.
- A moratorium on the development of new corporate foster homes.
- An autism epidemic (1 in 88 children).
- The lowest rate of employment of any demographic group.
- Only 3,000 individuals on Consumer Directed Community Supports who are directing their own care.
- Millions of dollars being spent without achieving agreed-upon outcomes.
- An aging population, which will put a strain on public dollars.

The current system is unable to address the problems above and is unsustainable. There will be fewer resources to serve a greater number of individuals with I/DD now and in the future. If we continue to provide services as they have in the past, our waiting lists will grow, wages paid for services will be cut, and satisfaction with services will decrease. Minnesota's disability supports are now designed to be run by systems, rather than the individuals who need the services.

Moving Toward the Vision

This vision will be accomplished over the next five years by:

- Passing legislation in 2013 proposed by The Arc Minnesota which will give every individual with I/DD their annual budget allocation information.
- Implementing the MN Choices individualized assessment in 2013/2014. This will be a common assessment tool used for all persons with disabilities on Medical Assistance.

- Passing DHS' proposed Reform 2020 in 2013, with recommended changes from The Arc. Reform 2020 will transform personal care assistance (PCA) services to a self-directed model called Community First Services and Supports.
- Developing individualized budgets by 2015 for all individuals with I/DD who receive long-term services and supports, based on information gathered from the MN Choices assessment.
- Working with providers towards a system of supports tailored to the individual rather than models that are less flexible and not as person-centered.
- Moving to a case management system in which individuals get to control their own support planner to assist them in planning and implementing their services.
- Implementing a licensing and quality system which emphasizes meeting an individual's needs, goals, and dreams.

Discussion of Key Issues

Waiting List - Reform 2020 states: *“Minnesota will redesign its state plan personal care assistance services and expand self-directed options under a new service called Community First Services and Supports (CFSS). These changes will result in the service meeting more needs, more appropriately, of more people, and at the same time, will reduce some pressure on the system as people use the flexibility within CFSS instead of accessing more expanded service menu of one of the five HCBS waivers”* (p. 26).

There has been an extreme limitation on new slots for the past ten years, and the waiting list for the Developmental Disabilities Waiver has remained at a level of 3,500-4,000 individuals. The vast majority of individuals on the waiting list receive PCA services. Implementation of CFSS will potentially reduce the waiting list by offering individual budgets and giving them more flexibility in using funds, including purchasing items to replace human assistance. We support these changes, which should help many individuals. However, this needs to be coupled with substantial changes in our current waiver service system so that those individuals will receive “the right service at the right time in the right place.” We cannot afford to over serve individuals because of unnecessary regulations or the lack of flexibility or creativity while we have a waiting list.

This is a different solution to the traditional way of lowering the waiting list (i.e., more waiver slots).

Corporate Foster Care Moratorium - On July 1, 2009, this moratorium went into effect due to the rising costs of corporate adult foster care. A challenge with the moratorium is that it left individuals and families with little if no information about their alternatives. One of the few alternatives developed was the Housing Access Services program managed by The Arc Minnesota which has helped 650+ individuals with disabilities find homes of their own. About 80 have moved out of corporate adult foster care, creating some movement in that system.

Self-Direction - In 2007 The Arc Minnesota championed the passage of the Self-Directed Supports Options (1915j) legislation, which would allow self-direction in the PCA program. A task force was formed and recommendations developed for implementing this option. These recommendations were shelved for four years but now have been resurrected in the proposed Community First Services and Supports (CFSS). This will be a major step forward in self-direction. In this proposal, the 22,000 people currently receiving PCA services will be able to choose to self-direct their services and have more flexibility to purchase supports other than just human assistance to meet their needs.

For those thousands of Minnesotans currently on waivers, 3,000 are using Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS). Reform 2020 calls for the development of individual budgets for all persons on the waivers based on the MN CHOICES assessment. The implementation of individual budgets, the elimination of the 30% discount for current CDCS participants, and revisions in the unallowables list will breakdown many barriers preventing individuals on the waiver from currently participating on CDCS.

Quality Assurance - Our current licensing system is not designed to judge quality. The paradigm needs to change so services are judged by whether people with disabilities are able to achieve their individual goals and meet their needs. In 2011 legislation was passed which called for the formation of the Quality Council. The Council will make recommendations to improve the quality of services in Minnesota. The Arc Minnesota is actively involved in this process and looks forward to the developing an alternative licensing system that is focused on the individual, not on satisfying rules and regulations.

Emerging Populations - Reform 2020 proposes to implement “the 1915(i) option allowing the state to provide coordinated services to a broader group of children with ASD who have significant functional impairments but do not otherwise qualify for a waiver.” This could benefit hundreds of Minnesotans. Many children with autism will could also benefit with the new flexibility available in the new PCA program CFSS.

Over 50% of PCA participants are now members of ethnic minorities. They will greatly benefit from implementing CFSS. This will provide more flexibility and creativity in supporting individuals so they can stay in their own homes.

PCA - This program has been the safety net for many individuals with disabilities and their families. Individuals have been able to stay in their homes and communities with the supports they get through the PCA program, but it is time for change.

Reform 2020 proposes to substantially change PCA services for the better. PCA services are one of our lowest reimbursed services under Medical Assistance. We need to maximize the impact of every dollar spent. If done right, the transition from PCA services to CFSS program will give individuals more control, more flexibility, and a greater choice of supports within their individual budgets.