

Medicaid for Working Persons with Disabilities (MWPDP Testimony)

House Commerce and Economic Development Committee Bill

March 9, 2016

First of all, I would like to thank Chairman Botzow and the Committee for considering this issue and asking me to testify. The pertinent provision within the Committee's 2016 Economic Development bill which will move forward the work incentive enhancements in the Medicaid for Working Persons with Disabilities (MWPDP) program, as per Act 51 of 2015, was necessitated due to a statutory conflict. It is basically a "housekeeping" provision to allow for statutory compatibility and for the State of Vermont to proceed with its responsibilities under Act 51, including communication with Federal partners, in a timely manner.

I applaud the Vermont Departments of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), of Health Access (DVHA) and of Children and Families (DCF) for diligently following the intent and timeline of Act 51 of 2015. Indeed the meticulousness of the interdepartmental workgroup assigned to the task discovered the incompatibility precluding fulfilling such intent and timeliness.

I would like to once again express my fervent and sincere support for the work incentive enhancements to the MWPDP program, considered and approved by the 2015 legislature, and assure the Committee that those changes will allow more persons with disabilities to be employed and for a greater number of hours while having access to appropriate health care. The heightened productivity can only benefit the individual and the State as a whole. More people will be allowed to be self-sufficient and live independently with dignity and self-respect. In addition, an employed individual has been shown to be healthier and less costly within the health care system.

I will be glad to answer any questions the Committee may have, although I think most of the substantive questions were answered last session. I would defer to legislative counsel to answer any technical questions arising from the detected incompatibility and from the statutory correction.

I thank the Committee and Chairman Botzow once again for this opportunity to testify and look forward to the implementation of the MWPDP provisions within Act 51 in their fullest.

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