

February 26, 2024

RE: **SB0362/HB0352**

Please remove from this bill any reference to ARTICLE-HEALTH-GENERAL SECTION 7-101 and SECTION 7-409. Leave all the provisions of the Self Direction Act of 2022 (The Act) intact.

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

We are the parents and official guardians of a participant who receives DDA Waiver services under the self-directed service model.

The changes proposed in the above referenced bill reverse a major provision of the Self Direction Act of 2022. The changes would allow the DDA to establish an arbitrary limit on Individual and Family Directed Goods and Services (IFDGS).

This cap will have a detrimental effect on our son's independence, community inclusion, health, and safety. Our autistic 22-year-old son, Samuel, is in his first year of receiving DDA services. We could not find a Community Development vendor able to staff for him due to his complex, multiple diagnoses and need for intense behavioral support. As a Self-Directed individual, we found the Cura Personalis Project (CPP). Supported by his 1:1 staff, Sam learns vocational and social skills five days a week through the CPP program located at a horse stable. The mostly outdoor environment gives him the space to safely manage his intense dysregulated moments and to participate at his own pace and in his own way. (see photos below)

DDA requires that Cura Personalis invoice as an IFDGS service. Yet, arbitrary limits on IFDGS would prevent Sam and others from using their approved funds to fully access the program. For example, a cap of \$5,000 would only cover half of the annual cost for his 5-day/week spot. Please remember: IFDGS spending **does not add additional funds; it merely allows access to the approved funds within the budget.**

Arbitrary limits will prevent Sam from achieving the goals in his person centered plan. IFDGS is part of Sam's approved plan and budget based on his assessed support needs-- direct services such as Personal Supports, Community Integration, Job Supports, and more. The rates for these services were set by DDA and the budget generated for his needs should be available to him.

Since the changes to the waiver resulting from the Act became effective on July 1, 2023, our son has been able to access the funds from his DDA approved budget in order to reach the outcomes and goals in his person centered plan.

We appeal to you to **leave all the provisions of the Self Direction Act of 2022 (The Act) intact, so that Sam and other self-directed adults can continue to hold the reins of their own lives by maintaining the ability to spend approved funds through IFDGS in a manner that best supports their plan.**

Sincerely,

Tracey Wright and Sheldon Alberts
Parents and Official Guardians of a Self-Directed individual with disabilities

