



Legislative Priorities

Minnesota often is considered a progressive leader for people with disabilities. When it comes to accessibility, there are many ways in which Minnesota does well. We have laws and policies that address accommodations such as ramps, curb cuts, closed captioning, and a variety of other adaptations. Unfortunately, many lawmakers and community members don't realize that neurodivergent populations, including autistic individuals and those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, also require accommodations. Those accommodations may look quite different from classic ideas of support.

Minnesota needs and deserves accessibility for all its citizens, including those whose disabilities are invisible.

As we head into 2024, the AuSM Advocacy Committee has been hard at work setting our priorities for the upcoming legislative session. Following up on a year of wins in 2023, we're continuing some of our ongoing priorities and adding new bills to our agenda as well.

AuSM's legislative package component proposals are described on the reverse. If you would like more information, please reach out to the AuSM Advocacy Committee at advocacy@ausm.org or 651.647.1083.

What is Autism?

About AuSM

The Autism Society of Minnesota exists to enhance the lives of individuals with autism spectrum disorder. AuSM seeks to realize its mission through education, support, collaboration, and advocacy.
www.ausm.org

Autism is a lifelong neurological disorder that affects 1 in 36 individuals in Minnesota. Although precise neurobiological mechanisms have not yet been established, it is clear that this disability reflects the operation of factors in the developing brain.

Autism includes two major components: differences in socialization and communication, and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior. Autism is a spectrum. Individuals will have their own unique constellation of traits, as well as their own

strengths, preferences, and identities. No single behavior can be used to identify autism. Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries. Family income, life-style, and educational levels do not affect the chance of a person having autism.

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2024 Legislative Priorities

1. Subminimum Wage

In 2023, Minnesota passed legislation making historic investments in the move to pay people with disabilities the minimum wage or higher, as well as increase customized and integrated employment for that population. Those investments include support and education for families, technical assistance for providers and lead agencies (counties), and ongoing training for case management. In 2024, we are looking to guarantee minimum wage for people with disabilities, the final step in taking our previous work to its fruition.

2: Medical Assistance for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MA-EPD) HF 3419, SF 3648

This proposal seeks to eliminate the premiums that are charged to individuals who receive MA-EPD, and prevent the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) from discharging individuals who cannot afford to pay their current MA-EPD premium. The proposal to eliminate MA-EPD premiums was on the verge of passing last session. A mistake from DHS related to the fiscal note caused the provision related to the premium elimination to be removed from the omnibus bill at the 11th hour. Prior to that removal, the proposal had broad support from the house, senate, and governor's office.

3: Sensory-Friendly Event Licensing

We are continuing to work on legislation that would create event permit requirements for large event approval to include requirements to provide sensory friendly space or accommodations for any public event that includes more than 1,000 participants.

4: Disability System Accessibility Project, HF3445, SF3894

In a new strategy we are shifting our previous bill which would have created a task force for reporting on accessibility issues within disability services. Our new bill will launch a project using journey mapping to create a realistic look at the experiences of people accessing services and supports in MN. This shift is coming in reaction to DHS concerns about cost and capacity to complete the goals of the task force.

5: Special Education Parent Accessibility

We have been working on a bill outlining requirements for educators to accommodate parents with disabilities in the IEP process to allow better access to special education for families with multiple generations of disability. This year we will be updating this to include preferred language requirements in cooperation with Multicultural Autism Action Network (MAAN) and The MN Deaf and Hard of Hearing Council.

6: Disability Justice and Anti-Ableism in Education

We will be supporting MAAN in legislation to require anti-ableism and disability justice training for all special education teachers as a move towards cultural competency for the disability community.