

DAVE DURENBERGER
MINNESOTA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 14, 1988

Melvin D. Heckt
Bassford, Heckt, Lockhart,
& Mullin, P. A.
3550 Multifoods Tower
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Dear Melvin:

Thank you for contacting my office concerning Senator Chafee's Medicaid Home and Community Quality Services Act, S. 1673.

In the past few months, I have spoken with many individuals about this bill. Few issues have received more of my personal attention than the provision of quality services for the developmentally disabled. Since the births of two profoundly retarded nephews more than 20 years ago, I have been touched by the special meaning, enrichment and challenges these individuals bring to our lives. I know first hand of the difficulties that parents of the developmentally disabled face as they try to find programs or facilities that will enable their children to develop to their fullest potential.

Thus, I applaud Senator Chafee and the many dedicated parents and organizations who have worked to produce this important piece of legislation. The intention of this bill is to remove the current bias in the Medicaid program for institutional placement of the developmentally disabled, and to give to more disabled individuals and their families the option of home and community based placement and services. I strongly believe that the disabled individual, with his or her parents, should have the freedom to choose the most appropriate living environment and services that meet his or her needs.

While I strongly support the movement toward community based living arrangements, and the many positive aspects of this bill, I am concerned about Senator Chafee's proposal to freeze federal reimbursement to facilities that exceed 15 beds, and to place size limitations on future facilities. These limitations seem unnecessarily arbitrary and could foreclose a few excellent programs in Minnesota. I believe the quality of a facility should be measured not by size, but rather by the extent to which the facility and its services meet the quality of life needs of its residents.

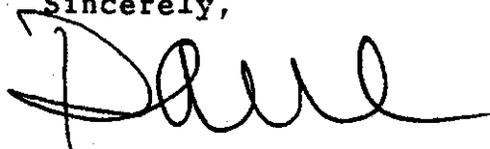
I was pleased when Senator Mitchell decided to hold hearings on this bill. Because of the sensitivity surrounding this issue, I believe it is important that the Senate have the opportunity to hear from both sides. The hearing was held on March 22.

Melvin D. Heckt
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I intend to continue to discuss this issue with my constituents and with Senator Chafee in hopes of reaching a favorable resolution that will best serve all of the developmentally disabled community, and that will permit my cosponsorship of this bill before final passage.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts with me. Your comments are very valuable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Dave Durenberger
United States Senator

DAVE DURENBERGER
MINNESOTA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

July 15, 1988

Melvin D. Heckt
Bassford, Heckt, Lockhart,
Truesdell, & Briggs, P. A.
3550 Multifoods Tower
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3000

Dear Melvin:

Thank you for contacting my office concerning Senator Chafee's Medicaid Home and Community Quality Services Act, S. 1673.

In the past few years, I have spoken with many individuals about this bill. Few issues have received more of my personal attention than the provision of quality services for the developmentally disabled. Since the births of two profoundly retarded nephews more than 20 years ago, I have been touched by the special meaning, enrichment and challenges these individuals bring to our lives. I know first hand of the difficulties that parents of the developmentally disabled face as they try to find programs or facilities that will enable their children to develop to their fullest potential.

Thus, I applaud Senator Chafee and the many dedicated parents and organizations who have worked to produce this important piece of legislation. The intention of this bill is to remove the current bias in the Medicaid program for institutional placement of the developmentally disabled, and to give to more disabled individuals and their families the option of home and community based placement and services. I strongly believe that the disabled individual, with his or her parents, should have the freedom to choose the most appropriate living environment and services that meet his or her needs.

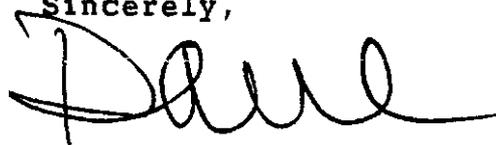
While I strongly support the movement toward community based living arrangements, and the many positive aspects of this bill, I remain concerned about Senator Chafee's proposal to freeze federal reimbursement to facilities that exceed 15 beds, and to place size limitations on future facilities. These limitations seem unnecessarily arbitrary and could foreclose a few excellent programs in Minnesota. I believe the quality of a facility should be measured not by size, but rather by the extent to which the facility and its services meet the quality of life needs of its residents.

Although these concerns continue to prevent me from cosponsoring this bill, I am still hopeful that Senator Chafee and I can reach a favorable compromise that will best serve all developmentally disabled individuals in settings most appropriate to meet their needs.

I am currently drafting a set of amendments aimed at achieving these goals. It is my hope that these amendments will satisfy both sides and will allow for a meaningful reform of our Medicaid system in the near future.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts with me. Your comments are very valuable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Dave Durenberger
United States Senator