MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

April 20, 2026

RE: Draft Olmstead Plan Goals

Dear Director Purrington and Co-Director Merz,

The Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD) is writing to express gratitude and appreciation for the State of Minnesota's efforts to write a new Olmstead Plan through its Implementation Office. However, we have concerns with both the draft Olmstead Plan goals and the process used to develop them.

As you may know, MCD serves as a liaison between Minnesotans with disabilities and state agencies. Our mission is to advance a barrier-free Minnesota through policy, training, and technical assistance.

Minnesota has long been a national leader in disability policy, and the Olmstead Plan—established in 2011 through the Jensen Settlement—is central to that leadership. It reflects core ADA principles and has driven meaningful progress in our state over the last several years. As the plan is updated, it must maintain that integrity and ambition while reflecting the lived experiences of Minnesotans with disabilities.

MCD, other disability leaders in the State of Minnesota executive branch, and members of the disability community have noted that the current draft falls short of that standard. The proposed goals do not meet specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) criteria and lack sufficient ambition to drive meaningful systems change. Additional concerns include:

- Some goals do not have clearly defined measurements or are not measurable
- Strategies for implementation are unclear or underdeveloped
- Baseline data appears inconsistent or insufficient to support measurement
- There are no clear accountability or enforcement mechanisms
- Many goals are so incremental and conservative; we advise a combination of incremental goals and larger, stretch goals

The draft also has some notable omissions. In our 2025 Legislative Priorities Survey, for example, we heard feedback about disability services from 800 Minnesotans across the state. Per this survey, Minnesotans with disabilities consistently highlighted transportation as a cross-cutting barrier affecting access to health care, employment, and community life. These respondents frequently described challenges finding reliable transportation, particularly in rural areas, highlighting missed appointments,

limited provider access, and increased isolation. We therefore believe it is critically important that our Olmstead Plan puts forward goals and strategies to improve access to reliable, accessible transportation, particularly in Greater Minnesota.

Throughout the goal development process, the disability community raised similar concerns. Unfortunately, this feedback was not meaningfully incorporated into the draft before being sent out for public comment. This has caused many in the disability community to lose trust in the process and question whether the Olmstead Sub-cabinet agencies will integrate the community's input.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage the Olmstead Implementation Office and its Sub-cabinet of agencies to revise the draft plan by incorporating stakeholder feedback, strengthening the goals and metrics, and establishing clear mechanisms for accountability.

The Olmstead Implementation Office can only work with the goals at each agency's discretion which means we need strong leadership from these agencies along with the downward pressure from state leadership to challenge their Olmstead Plan staff to be more ambitious and including stretch goals that are identified as such.

This plan must be the best we can do in our state, but we are concerned the draft does not meet this standard. We have an opportunity once again to lead by example and continue to make progress towards full inclusion and community integration for people with disabilities.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further and to support efforts to strengthen the plan.

Sincerely,

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