

## ➤ *Press Conference Speakers Urge Rep. Paulsen to Protect Medicaid*

At a [November 1st press conference](#) at Hammer Residences in Wayzata, advocates from the This is Medicaid coalition called on Minnesota's U.S. Third District Congressman Erik Paulsen to protect Medicaid (also known as Medical Assistance or MA) from funding cuts when House members debate bills to overhaul the federal tax code. The U.S. House released its long-awaited bill on tax reform on November 2nd. (See more below.) The bill is scheduled to be heard next week in the House Ways and Means Committee, of which Rep. Paulsen is a member.



Hugh Kirsch, board member and parent advocate for Hammer Residences (photo), spoke eloquently at the press conference about how important Medicaid has been for his adult son, who has significant disabilities and needs. "I don't know where my son would be today if we didn't have Medicaid," he said. Others detailed how Medicaid-funded supports benefitted the people they serve and the danger of cutting these programs to pay for tax cuts that could total trillions of dollars. Speakers included Julie Sjoldal, CEO of St. David's Child and Family Development Center; Annette Sandler, Aging and Disability Services Director at Jewish Family and Children Service of Minneapolis; and Susie Emmert Schatz, Senior Director of Advocacy at Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota. Watch the entire press conference on [a live video](#) on Facebook.

## ➤ *U.S. House Leaders Unveil Tax Bill*

Republican leaders in the U.S. House introduced long-awaited legislation on November 2nd to make extensive changes in the U.S. tax code. The bill's proponents argue that it will reduce individual and corporate taxes, spur more economic growth, and put more money in taxpayers' pockets. Critics argue that the bill's benefits will primarily go to the wealthiest Americans and most profitable companies. The bill eliminates many current deductions available to taxpayers, including those for large health care costs, which are important to families who have major medical bills.

The House has passed previous legislation that allows it to add \$1.5 trillion to the federal deficit. If it passes a tax cut this large, the resulting deficits could pressure Congress to cut funds for vital federal programs like Medicaid, housing, education, and other supports for people with disabilities and their families. The bill does not [repeal the Affordable Care Act](#), as some members of Congress and the White House have proposed. There will be a hearing on the bill next week in the House Ways and Means Committee.



The Arc Minnesota and other partner agencies in the This Is Medicaid coalition are advocating that Minnesota's Congressional delegation hold Medicaid harmless when making decisions about how to pay for any tax changes and tax cuts. Nan Madden, Director of the Minnesota Budget Project (a coalition member), expressed this view in a [November 3<sup>rd</sup> Star Tribune article](#) on the tax bill. Rep. Erik Paulsen (photo) will be the focus on much of the coalition's advocacy, especially when the bill is debated in the Ways and Means Committee.

## ➤ Chapter Activities Connect You With Policymakers

- Darla Nemec, Board Member of The Arc Greater Twin Cities, is hosting a home visit for policy advocates and elected officials in State Senate District 48 on Monday, November 13 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Darla will hold the event at her home, 17740 Pavelka Drive in Eden Prairie. Area officials from Eden Prairie city government, Eden Prairie's school district, Hennepin County government, and the Minnesota House and Senate have been invited to attend. RSVP or direct any questions to Gene Martinez (952-915-3616 or [genemartinez@thearcgtc.org](mailto:genemartinez@thearcgtc.org)).
- The Arc Southeastern Minnesota is hosting a legislative forum on November 14 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at ProAct, 204 Mississippi Avenue in Red Wing. Elected officials invited to attend include U.S. Representative Jason Lewis, State Representatives Steve Drazkowski and Barb Haley, and State Senator Mike Goggin. Advocates will have time to pose specific questions and share their stories with those officials who attend. RSVP or direct questions to [mail@arcse-mn.org](mailto:mail@arcse-mn.org) or 1-888-732-8520.

## ➤ Outdated Education Guidance Documents Withdrawn

Twice in October, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) withdrew documents that it called "outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective." On October 19th, it announced, without explanation, that 72 documents under the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services had been withdrawn. The Arc of the U.S. was initially concerned that these documents contained important guidance to parents and families about implementing special education laws and regulations; this concern was reported by some national media, such as the *Washington Post*. However, advocates later reviewed those documents and received follow-up from DOE, and they have so far concluded that the department's actions were justified.

On October 27th, DOE announced withdrawal of nearly 600 other pieces of regulatory guidance it considered out-of-date, superseded by current law, or no longer in effect. It stated, "Removing these out-of-date materials will make it easier for schools, educators, parents, and the public to understand what guidance is still in effect." The Arc U.S. said that its initial analysis agrees that these documents are outdated, but they will review them in more depth. The Department's Regulatory Reform Task Force's full report and a list of out-of-date guidance materials by office are available [here](#).

## ➤ Next Work Is Possible Workshop: Nov. 15th in Willmar

October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month may be over, but the work of The Arc Minnesota and its partners in [A Working Life Alliance](#) to promote competitive employment continues. Their next Work is Possible! workshop will be on November 15 from 4:00 - 6:30 p.m. at the Willmar Conference Center, 240 23rd Street SE in Willmar.

Work is Possible! gives future job seekers and their family supporters information about key changes in federal and state policy that are providing new opportunities for people with disabilities wanting a job in the workforce. Also, self-advocates and families will share their success stories and the paths they took to reach their goals. In addition, staff from our [Minnesota Microgrant Partnership](#) will discuss how their grants can make a difference for job seekers. [Sign up now](#) for this free event. If you have questions, contact Melinda Shamp at 651-604-8080 or [melindas@arcmn.org](mailto:melindas@arcmn.org).

## ➤ The First of Many Reasons to Give to the Max

Reason #1 for supporting The Arc MN on Give to the Max Day, Nov. 16th: Our [Housing Access Services](#) program has moved 1,974 people with disabilities to homes of their own. Help us continue our work to maximize the independence and inclusion of Minnesotans with disabilities. Look for more stories in upcoming *Public Policy Updates* and on social media, and thanks in advance for your support!

