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Shawn Sullivan, Secretary

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To: Senate Commerce Committee

From: Lea Stueve
Legislative/Policy Director

Date: March 13, 2013

Subject: S.B.195, Kansas Employment First Initiative Act amendments

Chairwoman Lynn and members of the Committee:

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) is committed to advancing and supporting competitive and integrated employment as the first option for Kansans with disabilities of working age. These inclusive employment goals are laudable and should be pursued.

Within KDADS, there are a number of programs/ supports for individuals pursuing competitive and integrated employment. KDADS is involved in a contract with Community Developmental Disability Organizations (CDDOs) which allows persons seeking employment who are listed on the statewide waiting list for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) services to still receive supports. Specifically, these individuals, who have been referred to Vocational Rehabilitation Services for employment services and then successfully designated as competitively employed, have access to HCBS/I/DD Supported Employment waiver funding which is needed to help keep these individuals on the job.

Another key component of the Agency's commitment to these goals is the facilitation of the Employment First Workgroup. This group is comprised of various State Agencies, representatives from work force centers, advocates, and the CDDOs. Among other things, the Employment First Workgroup is charged with developing a comprehensive community employment service delivery evaluation with recommendations; identifying barriers and disincentives to increased independence in such areas as competitive employment; reviewing Vocational Rehab's role in assisting with supported employment, and studying other methods of Medicaid funding such as support waivers for supported employment.

KDADS is also working to ensure that KanCare, the new Medicaid program, is prepared to support individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment. The Intellectual/Developmental Disability KanCare pilot advisory group has been instrumental in helping prepare the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) for this transition and ensuring that individuals can be fully supported as they seek employment out in the communities where they reside. This advisory group will continue to ensure accountability as the KanCare program continues.

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services strongly believes in an inclusive workforce and we support the chance to discuss how to best serve Kansans who are disabled and who are seeking employment. S.B. 195 offers a positive opportunity to continue this conversation.

Senate Commerce Committee
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