

Meet Al

The support of Direct Care Workers is critical to his independence.

Al wants nothing more than to live in his little house in Marquette, MI. He loves to hike on the many trails in his beloved UP, grab takeout to eat by the beach and go to the gym. His easygoing lifestyle changed drastically in 2020.

Perhaps in part due to the pandemic shutdowns, Al, a man who is non-verbal living with autism, began to struggle behaviorally.

His staffing provider was already having difficulty filling his 24/7 staffing needs. After a particularly difficult incident, his provider finally gave notice. They simply did not have the capacity to support Al any longer.

At that time Al was taken to the emergency room so that doctors could determine if his behaviors were related to a medical cause. With Al's provider out of the picture, he was unable to leave the ER until either a residential placement or replacement staff could be found.

Each day his case manager checked with group homes and hospitals all over Michigan. Each day she was told that there were no beds. In the meantime, his mother found a small team of

staff that she was able to hire to support Al in his home. He finally came home.

Unfortunately, settling back into his life was not easy. Al was struggling with extreme anxiety. The staff team was very small and there were not enough people to cover all of the hours in the day. Al experienced another incident that brought him to the ER. This time he was admitted into the mental health unit.



The doctors made some medication adjustments and Al could have gone home, but in the time he was in the hospital, he lost some of his staff. That meant that he did not have enough staff to come home.

Again, his mother and support system began searching for more staff. It took over 100 days before Al could go home. Even now that he is back home, one staff injury or resignation will put him back in jeopardy. His mom lives in constant worry that someone from the team will leave and Al will again be left without support. Al and his mother need our help to solve this staffing shortage.

MICHIGAN NEEDS TO SUPPORT DIRECT CARE WORKERS WHO ARE THE LIFELINE FOR SO MANY PEOPLE LIKE AL.