

Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Minnesota Legislative Health Care Workforce Commission
c/o Kasey Gerkovich
Legislative Coordinating Commission
72 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Public Testimony for MnLHCWC Meeting on December 15, 2015

Commission Members:

As I'm unable to attend the commission meeting today, please accept my public testimony via video [<https://youtu.be/Y0QbEgdzvzE>]. The transcript of the video along with relevant links appears below.

My name is [Lance Hegland](#). I'm a resident of Minneapolis in District 60B. I rely on in-home personal care assistant services because I have spinal muscular atrophy, a form of muscular dystrophy. My struggles to find and keep workers have become much worse over the past 6 years, especially the past 12 to 18 months. During these past 6 years, the Twin Cities has gone from [the highest unemployment to the 2nd lowest unemployment we've experienced in a quarter century](#).

I'm not alone in my struggles. Many older adults and people with disabilities across Minnesota are struggling. We're experiencing a significant workforce shortage. That is why I work on a variety of workforce development activities, including launching a direct support job board and founding the [Direct Support Workforce Development Council](#).

Since entry-level direct support work is a vital incubator that finds and nurtures future health and human service professionals, these issues — and our efforts to address these issues — are of particular interest to this Commission. By investing leadership, time, and energy to work with us, this Commission can increase the capacity of Minnesota's critical pipeline supplying future health and human service professionals.

By simultaneously addressing these entry-level and professional shortages, you can increase the impact of this Commission's investments by reaching, engaging, and grooming future professionals earlier. By addressing entry-level shortages, you're investing in prevention -- thereby reducing demand for more aggressive and expensive health and human service interventions.

Our shortage of entry-level support workers creates significant risk for older adults and people with disabilities. Risks include reduced health, safety, education, employment, plus family and community inclusion. Insufficient labor creates similar risks for existing workers plus our families and friends who're sacrificing to go above and beyond to help us maintain our stability. They are struggling as well.

This isn't simply a workforce issue. This isn't just an economic issue. This is a moral issue. This is an ethical issue. It's a civil rights and human rights issue.

Bottom line: We must work together to address both the current entry-level direct support workforce shortage plus future health and human service workforce shortage.

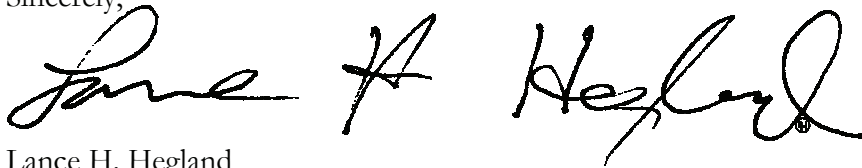
We have unique insight into these challenges and their causes. We have ideas to address them. We need your leadership and your support.

Thank you for your consideration to actively work with the Direct Support Workforce Development Council and other similar groups in our communities. I look forward to collaborating with you.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or other feedback, please feel free to contact me by e-mail (lance.hegland@gmail.com) or telephone (763-218-1433).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lance H. Hegland". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "L" and "H".

Lance H. Hegland