

PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM MN PCA RECIPIENT IMPACTED BY WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

As a Minnesotan relying on publicly-funded personal care assistance (PCA) services and struggling with our existing shortage of direct support workers, including being one of the recipient-attendees of the Direct Care / Support Workforce Summit held during July, please include this email and my email below as part of the public record related to public comments for today's (Tuesday 10/4) Legislative Health Care Workforce Commission Meeting. I'll be unable to attend in-person. My comments relate to agenda items #3 ("Update on 2016 Direct Care Workforce Summit") plus #1c ("Commission Work Plan Review").

In addition, please distribute this email to each of the Legislative Health Care Workforce Commission members.

MHCA LABOR MARKET AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS + RECOMMENDATIONS

While I agree with the labor market and industry analysis offered by MHCA as well as the recommendation to address the reimbursement deficit in home and community-based services (HCBS), I strongly disagree with the recommendation to explore competency-based certification for HCBS workers at this time. In our current labor market, Minnesotans relying on Medicaid-funded HCBS workers do not have enough workers to receive consistent and reliable support services, let alone train workers. Minnesota doesn't have sufficient direct support workforce capacity. The compensation available to Medicaid-funded HCBS workers isn't even enough to provide a competitive wage in our current labor market in the absence of required and/or optional training. The compensation surely isn't sufficient to incentivize or retain more highly skilled workers for Medicaid-funded HCBS recipients, especially if workers are not compensated for their time, energy, and additional training expenses. It's simple labor economics. First, HCBS worker wages must be raised to be consistently and reliably competitive, Minnesota can improve direct support recruitment and retention, next training can be improved, then workers' compensation can be tied to a competency-based model that provides at least livable wages. Only then will the socioeconomic challenges faced by direct support workers in addition to older adults, people with disabilities, and our families be addressed.

MNs DESERVE SWIFT + STRATEGIC DEV'T LEVERAGING CAREER PATHS: DIRECT SUPPORT TO HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

Minnesotans deserve swift and strategic workforce development, such as those [strategic initiatives outlined in the linked document](#). Minnesotans deserve programs that engage high school students, college students, and others in vocational transition, such as [the outreach program outlined in the linked document](#). Minnesotans deserve career paths for direct support workers that empower them to pursue more advanced professional health care opportunities if desired, such as [those paths suggested in the linked document](#).

If you have any questions, please contact me by e-mail or phone (763-218-1433).

Thank you and the Commission for your diligence and perseverance on behalf of Minnesotans.

Sincerely, Lance

Minnesota PCA Choice Recipient

Direct Care / Support Workforce Summit Attendee

Bush Fellow

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