

October 31, 2016

Legislative Health Care Workforce Commission Members:

In regard to your upcoming meeting agenda item, “Post-sunset Health Workforce Coordination and Governance Ideas”, I hope you strongly **consider establishing a statewide, multi-stakeholder, inter-disciplinary, cross-industry governing body that meets regularly** (e.g. monthly or bimonthly) to **continue monitoring, strategizing, and working to improve our health and human service workforce** — Statewide Health and Human Services Workforce Development Council. We’re already experiencing increased risk and deteriorated health and human service quality. This is a serious public health and public safety matter.

This governing body could be similar to the Minnesota State Quality Council (for disability services). Such a governing group implement and monitor potential projects similar to the [Community Workforce Research Proposal](#), [Community Discussion Proposal](#), [Career-Seeker Awareness and Engagement for Health and Human Services Proposal](#), or [other ideas related to health and human services](#).

Given our existing health and human services workforce shortage, increasing public health and safety risks and impacts, plus projected deterioration over the next decade, **Minnesota needs sustained leadership**. This is evident in our [statewide labor market data from the 2nd quarter \(April to July\)](#). During Q2, there was still **only one unemployed Minnesotan available for each job opening**. [According to DEED](#), “**over one in five [or 20% of the] reported vacancies were in Health Care and Social Assistance**, making it the **number one in-demand industry** in the second quarter of 2016 ... Additionally, within Health Care and Social Assistance **vacancies increased by 15.2 percent over the year**, highlighting the need for workers in Minnesota’s largest-employing industry sector.” In this sector, there were roughly **21,000 job vacancies — nearly 25% increase from 6 years ago**.

Nearly **half of these vacancies relate to direct support positions (8,800)**. Over **80% of all direct support vacancies relate to personal care assistants, home health aides, and nursing assistants (7,300), the lowest compensated direct support positions in light of their responsibilities**. A [summary of direct support labor data](#) can be found through the previous link.

Thank you for your consideration.

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

Sincerely, Lance