

JOINT  
SENATE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE  
AND  
HOUSE HEALTH & WELFARE COMMITTEE  
Friday, February 12, 2016

ATTACHMENT 8

02/12/16  
Lindsay Dial

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Rescare Home Care Boise

During my time working in the homecare field I have made it a point to get to know my caregivers and clients very well. I want them to know I am available to them and I am their biggest support. Not only have I developed a relationship with my clients through quarterly house visits, but I have also worked many shifts with them. I also know their cares very well. I get to see firsthand how hard my care givers work to take care of my clients. My concern comes with watching the amount of work my care givers do for how little they are paid.

I have a caregiver that is living out of her car with her two little dogs. She knows we cannot pay her what she really deserves, but does this job because she knows these clients need the help. These passionate care givers can be hard to come by because of the low rates.

The cost of living in the Boise area continues to increase. With this increase the minimum wage stays at \$7.25 which is throwing people into poverty. This in turn is costing the state of Idaho more money on welfare. According to Forbes, a family of four to live comfortably in the state of Idaho needs to make \$56,491 per year, in the rural area, a family of four needs to make \$58,071 per year. We are forcing people to live off the government.

The low rates Medicaid has set for the care we provide for our clients is asinine. We cannot keep caregivers staffed because they have to leave to make more money to live. For the care givers that do stay working for us we are forced to cut them to 40 hours per week, to avoid overtime. For clients that are authorized 56 hours per week, we are only able to service 40 of those hours because we cannot stay in business if we pay overtime so these clients go without the additional 16 hours they need.

This brings me to my next point; I have a client that is a quadriplegic. He was in a car accident 3 years ago with his wife and three kids. They were heading to a family reunion over towards Mountain Home. The car flipped and landed on the father while the rest of the family walked out with some bumps and bruises. The father was paralyzed with a broken neck. This father was 24 yr old at the time of the accident. Now at the age of 27, he has been with several different agencies because they could not keep him staffed due to the lack of caregivers and due to their inability to afford overtime wages. This has forced his wife who carries a full time job to stay home to do his catheter, ROM, bowel care, and all the other cares he cannot go without. Eventually these working spouses lose their jobs because we cannot staff their hours and now their entire family is forced to live off of welfare so she is able to take care of her husband. Medicaid's guidelines state that a spouse cannot be hired on to care for the client so we have a client who is finally be served the hours he needs but a family who lives entirely off the system. These families who are trying to do the right thing and keep a job to support their families can't because the health and welfare won't help the agencies who are trying to give them those opportunities.

Since we don't have the caregivers for our clients, are we to just let it get to the point where they are now in the hospital and worse off? Or they have to go to a facility where it would cost Health and welfare more money? Where these people who have worked so hard for their homes and belongings to have to move into a facility where they are uncomfortable and confused. Where would you want your parents or loved ones to go? Would you like your wife or husband to be able to still live at home with you and their dementia, and have a caregiver come in to help take care of them? A person with dementia is better off in a place they are familiar with and with people they know. These caregivers are sometimes the only form of communication these clients have.

Raising the reimbursement rates would allow us to increase the pay for our caregivers, it will allow us to pay over time if needed, to make sure these clients receive the care they need. No one asks to be bed bound or have to rely on someone else to help them get dressed or bathed. Let these clients keep the little dignity they have left and stay in their homes, independently.