



The Bob Bethell Oversight Committee
April 22, 2022
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ATTENDANT CARE CRISIS

To the KanCare Oversight committee,

As I was thinking about coming to testify to the KanCare Oversight, for the first time in 30 years I wondered, 'what's the use?' I wondered if I could really sit with people with disabilities and their families hear them beg for adequate pay for their family members. It's gut wrenching to me but I know some people become numb to the requests and figure it isn't their problem to solve. I wondered how many more times I could hear that people at McDonald's make more than the direct care working professional caring for the baby with a trach and feeding tube. It only makes sense but I know that some people consider this line of funding charity instead of an investment in one of the most important work forces in Kansas. I wondered how many more 18 year olds have to be sent to nursing homes after long hospital and rehab stays because this line of professional work is not respected enough to pay a decent wage. I also wondered how this issue of inadequate pay could get on the magic list of problems for KDADs and KDHE to solve until EVERY Kansan who needs a direct care professional has one.

Telling the legislature for the 10th consecutive testimony in a row that there is a crisis in attendant care doesn't seem to work. I wondered what it would take to actually make the change that everyone, especially those in charge of the budget, knows is needed.

Can someone tell me? Can someone acknowledge it's a problem and not an afterthought? Can someone become the champion to make it happen?

There is a CRISIS in attendant care, aka direct support workers, in Kansas. In my 30 years of doing this work it has never been this bad. Of 300 people we are working with on the brain injury waiver, ALL 300 are citing this as an issue am regularly on team meeting calls and have heard care coordinators from MCOs recommend people go from rehab to nursing homes because they say they won't be able to find attendant care. I know of 7 people who have been forced to go from rehab to nursing homes because there is no attendant care. One is a 19 year old whose mother lives 4 hours away. I also have heard people be told that they should give up their apartment and go to a nursing home because they can't find attendant care. We are going backward.

To confirm this crisis knowing that people are only billing for 60% of their assessed attendant care needs. You can ask the mother who has a fulltime job but had to give it up because her daughter can't find help. Or the man with a spinal cord injury in Lawrence who spends many hours in bed waiting to get up. You have heard the stories and it's time to act.



The pay needs to be increased in this budget for the PD and BI waivers, people need to be allowed to receive overtime pay, the state needs to keep the provision from Appendix K allowing people to start work while waiting on background checks and in general, and the process to get workers needs to be easier. Can we add this to the magic list?

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