

# Wisconsin Personal Services Association: Statement on Joint Finance Committee Department of Workforce Development motion

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The Wisconsin Personal Services Association (WPSA) applauds the Joint Finance Committee for voting Thursday to ensure that personal care agencies receive state workforce development funds. Quality training programs are a critical part of the comprehensive set of solutions that are needed to solve Wisconsin's direct care workforce crisis.

"We would like to thank Representative Nygren, Representative Rohrkaste and Senator Olsen for their leadership on this issue and for their commitment to finding solutions to Wisconsin's severe personal care worker shortage." said WPSA Legislative Chair Todd Costello. "Ensuring that personal care agencies have access to Fast Forward worker training funds will allow them to develop comprehensive and consistent training programs that support quality care."

Wisconsin is currently experiencing a direct care workforce crisis so severe that it is putting people with disabilities and older adults in danger of serious illness, harm and a loss of independence. Personal care workers are on the front lines of Wisconsin's long-term care and health care systems—they provide intimate, in-home services that help older adults and people with disabilities remain independent.

An April 2019 survey of WPSA members revealed that the workforce crisis is posing serious threats to Wisconsin's provider network and jeopardizing access to care: 100% of agencies said they have been forced to turn away clients during the past year because they don't have enough workers. More than half (60%) of personal care agencies are considering no longer providing Medicaid services due to inadequate reimbursement rates.

A major contributing factor to the crisis is that the personal care rate has been underfunded for decades, making it difficult for agencies to recruit and retain workers. WPSA is advocating for an 11% increase to the Medicaid personal care rate to prevent the collapse of the Wisconsin's personal care provider network.

"WPSA looks forward to continued collaboration with the Legislature, Governor and the Department of Health Services to develop a comprehensive set of solutions to the personal care crisis," said Costello.

The Wisconsin Personal Services Association (WPSA) is the state's leading professional organization for personal care and other community-based home care providers. WPSA has educated, advocated, and united agencies and individuals in all Wisconsin counties for over 25 years to provide quality personal/supportive home care services to over 10,000 consumers and as many, if not more, direct care workers.