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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Disability Rights Wisconsin supports the Governor's veto of reduced training for CNAs

Disability Rights Wisconsin supports the Governor's veto of 2019 SB 103, a bill that would have decreased the training requirements for certified nurse aides (CNAs) from the current requirement of 120 hours to the federal minimum of 75. DRW appreciates the desire to solve the workforce problem and is grateful to policy makers who are trying to address it. However, although the bill may have been a well-intentioned effort to aid in alleviating the care taker workforce crisis, Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) was concerned that it could also lead to unintended long-term consequences which would diminish the quality of care and not necessarily result in a significant increase the CNA workforce numbers. In a June 5, 2019 memo to the Senate Committee of Health and Human Services, DRW expressed concern that the bill's lowered training requirements for certified nurse aides would affect the quality of care for people with disabilities in long-term and residential care facilities. Because caregivers provide the most intimate of cares to people with disabilities in very personal living situations, the people receiving the care must have confidence in and be comfortable with the skill and quality of the workforce. Studies have demonstrated that increased training reduces job turnover while increasing job satisfaction.

What is needed is a comprehensive plan to create growth opportunities and a rewarding career path that will encourage more individuals to enter the care-giving professions and equip them with the skills to provide quality care. The Governor's new Care Givers Task Force has been charged with finding strategies and recommendations on how to support and grow a strong direct care work force and improve quality. It is wise to allow this group of stakeholders, which includes people with disabilities and family members, to complete their work before any specific steps are undertaken. While the idea of decreasing training requirements may be included in the final recommendations, at that point it will be part of a carefully considered comprehensive plan to address the larger issue. DRW looks forward to this comprehensive set of recommendations from the Task Force in the fall of 2020.

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