

Testimony on SB 2012
Senate Appropriations Committee
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Pat Crotty, Pride

Chairman Fisher, members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services, my name is Pat Crotty. I have been employed in the field of developmental disabilities for 13 years. Having worked in both residential and vocational areas of this industry, I can tell you that the vast majority of those of us who do this type of work are working at far less than a living wage. Like many of my co-workers, I work 2 jobs (and take care of an elderly parent.) Others in this field work one job and live at a poverty level because they have children at home that they must provide for. Still others in this field also go to school or college so that they can leave this field one day and earn a good living. (something that isn't possible at today's income in the DD field).

Frankly, I believe this industry is heading for a meltdown if we do not:

- 1) Improve the income of workers in this field
- 2) Provide the private agencies the necessary funding for them to provide the necessary standards of services that are required.

The average worker/employee in the D.D. field is required to have 18 months of training to remain employable in this industry (along with continuing education each year after becoming certified. On a daily basis we give medications, test

glucose levels, provide insulin injections, we monitor finances of the clients we serve, we do hygienic procedures such as, toileting, bathing, etc. All for an income similar to that of fast food workers, security guards, janitors, etc. Not surprisingly we have annual turnover rates above 47 percent. In the last 2 years we have lost many of our most experienced employees and replacing them has been extremely difficult.

In short, this is a profession in every sense of the word but not in income, title, recognition or prestige, and thus, people leave. What other industry could successfully operate with so many challenges? If the current system fails through lack of adequate funding and staffing, what will replace it? And will that cost our state even more funding in the future? Will our state eventually have to step in to take over this industry?

I hope you'll take my comments seriously because we need to change this and we need to do it now!

Thank you.