

Steve Shumate

Consumer/Employer

Homecare workers have fought to bring quality services to their ~~client/consumers~~, all while Homecare workers were paid less than minimum wage, had no access to paid trainings and no health coverage.

Over the last decade, improved health benefits for in home care providers have stabilized a workforce that experienced 200% turnover in 1999. As workers can stay on the job because they receive health benefits, they are much more likely to receive training and be able to provide quality care to vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities.

Now, at \$10.20 an hour and access to good training and health care, Homecare workers allow many of Oregon's most vulnerable citizens to remain in their homes with independence, dignity and choice. A take away of health care could directly impact the quality of care that seniors and people with disabilities receive.

I ask for your support in this matter and ask that you share this point with the Governor.

Thank you.

Jennifer Havens

Homecare workers began negotiations for their contract 8 months ago. Despite months of negotiations, the State's current proposal on health care would mean that half of homecare workers currently receiving health care would lose it.

Currently, homecare workers need to work 80 hours a month in order to qualify for insurance. The State's proposal would change the eligibility requirement to 130 hours and require a \$70 a month pay-in. This means that 3,000 state funded care providers will be eliminated from insurance.

Homecare workers are a low-income workforce. Approximately 1/3 of homecare workers receive SNAP assistance. Eliminating thousands of homecare workers from health care could lead to cost-cost shifting and stress on the health care system, such as overuse of Emergency Rooms and more expensive treatment due to the lack of preventative care.

The State has not considered the cost shift to public assistance that will result from their contract proposal. 3,000 more people will likely be eligible for Oregon Health Plan and thousands more could be forced on to food stamps because of the burden of the pay-in.

I urge this board to consider these points and stress to the Governor of retaining a qualified pool of Homecare workers.

Thank you.