

Minutes: Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board

Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025

Minutes prepared by: Linnea Becerra

Location: Hybrid – Minnesota Room at the Department of Labor and Industry and via Webex

Attendance

Members present

Michelle Armstrong (remotely)

Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach (remotely)

Kim Brenne (remotely)

Michele Fredrickson

Jamie Gulley

Maria King (remotely)

Katie Lundmark (remotely)

Paula Rocheleau (remotely)

Mary Swanson

Visitors present

Todd Bergstrom

Maisie Blaine (remotely)

Jeff Bostic

Brian Elliott (remotely)

Debbie Prokopf (remotely)

DLI staff members present

Linnea Becerra

Paul Enger

Leah Solo

Agenda items

1. **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Jamie Gulley at 11:03 a.m. Roll call was taken. A quorum was declared.
2. **Approval of agenda** – A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Michele Fredrickson and seconded by Michelle Armstrong. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
3. **Approval of drafted meeting minutes** – A motion to approve the Feb. 13, 2025, drafted meeting minutes as presented was made by Fredrickson and seconded by Armstrong. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
4. **Board updates** –
 - Executive Director Leah Solo said she presented at the House Health and Human Services Committee about the board and what the board has been doing for the past 18 months. Solo also

presented to the House Workforce, Labor and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee with the same information.

- Paul Enger, from the Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI's) Office of General Counsel, explained that a comment came to the board about the rules being paused during litigation. Enger clarified that the rules are in effect until a court orders otherwise. Katie Lundmark asked if the board should release a statement about this topic; Solo said the board is able to do that. Enger said members can communicate this to their contacts or the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board could put something on the webpage about it. Rocheleau and Mary Swanson explained there is some confusion about supplemental nursing services agencies (SNSAs) and contractors and whether they are covered under the holiday pay rule. Solo suggested putting out another email message to provide clarity, while DLI Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach suggested adding it to the frequently asked questions document on the webpage.
- Solo reported workgroup updates, stating it was a light month of meetings. She relayed that the certification and training guide will be finalized and posted on the webpage. Rocheleau asked if there was a deadline for certified worker organization applications; Solo said there is no deadline, but the application review will have a standing spot on the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board agenda. Solo asked if the board wants the applications to go through a workgroup before being brought to the full board. It was agreed the members of the full board would like to see the initial applications and, if there are more than 10 or so, a workgroup will be formed.
- Gulley reported from the Waiver Review Workgroup, which again did not meet in March because no applications were received.

5. New business –

- Gulley raised the topic of future work around the standards.
 - A few questions were posed: What does the board want for future standards? What type of research and outreach does the board want to do? Should the next set of standards include more types of workers? Does the board need to collect different types of data? What kind of feedback has the board heard? The questions about feedback sparked conversation among members.
 - Swanson shared feedback from her facilities that some groups of workers, such as social workers, business office staff members and other leaders, feel left out of the standards and do not feel part of the team. Paula Rocheleau shared fears she has heard surrounding the proposed cuts to the nursing home industry. Lundmark agreed with Rocheleau. Fredrickson shared feedback she has heard from some nursing home business offices about their absence in the rules and wanting that discussed. Armstrong has heard workers are happy with the holiday pay rules and the supervisors she has heard from feel there needed to be change in the industry.
 - Gulley put forth some ideas for standards, including mandated overtime pay and retirement plans. There was discussion about collecting public data to see what the need is by workers.
 - Swanson suggested holding public hearings to discuss how the standards are affecting people and if they feel it has made a difference.
 - Gulley asked if there was a way to collect data about workers making more than \$30 an hour. Kim Brenne said the cost reports do not give wage rates. Additionally, registered nurses can be reported in many different ways on the cost report. Gulley suggested asking questions in the

survey workers receive at the end of their mandatory training every two years. Solo asked if the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board should check in with DLI's Prevailing Wage unit about how it does surveys. Commissioner Blissenbach said it is a six-month process and could maybe provide a model, but all of the prevailing-wage information is public. It was decided the Data Workgroup would look into this question more and report back to the full board.

- Solo shared she has invited the Department of Human Services to the next board meeting to explain proposals at the Capitol in response to a request from Rocheleau.
- Solo asked about data points, referencing a previous meeting remark from Lundmark about data that is good to collect, especially from other providers. Swanson asked to see information about what has improved since the standards have been in effect, such as any decrease in turnover, any increase in new hires and what has improved? Fredrickson asked if a cost report could show how many certified nursing assistants were in a building annually. Brenne said they collect data about the people who are employed in a facility. Lundmark said they have a way to establish family and resident satisfaction.
- Lundmark asked if a workgroup needs to be created; Gulley asked if the Data Workgroup could take this on. Rocheleau suggested the Data Workgroup take an initial look at these ideas and then consider next steps. Swanson broke the data down into two groups: one set of data would be used to answer the questions "Have we been successful?" and "Have we moved the dial?"; and the other set of data would answer the questions "What would be the next phase?" and "What other impacts do we want to make?" Maria King said the Department of Health has access to data regarding quality metrics, access to federal data websites and access to data regarding compliance.
- Swanson suggested the board needs data to prove what the board is doing is helping. Brenne suggested we need at least a year of wage data to be able to analyze things.
- It was decided to have the Data Workgroup explore what already is collected and make a recommendation to the board about next steps.

6. Next meeting – The next meeting is Thursday, April 10, 2025.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Swanson to adjourn the meeting at 12:03 p.m. and seconded by Fredrickson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.