

Minutes: Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board

Date: Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026

Minutes prepared by: Linnea Pignatello

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

Attendance

Members present

Michelle Armstrong
Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach (remotely)
Kim Brenne
Michele Fredrickson (remotely)
Jamie Gulley
Maria King (remotely)
Katie Lundmark
Paula Rocheleau
Mary Swanson (remotely)

Visitors present

Todd Bergstrom
Jeff Bostic
Jonathan Lips (remotely)
Kayla (remotely)

DLI staff members present

Paul Enger
Ken McGurran
Josiah Moore (remotely)
Linnea Pignatello
Leah Solo

Agenda items

- **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Jamie Gulley at 11:05 a.m. Roll call was taken. A quorum was declared.
- **Approval of agenda** – A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Michelle Armstrong and seconded by Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Approval of drafted meeting minutes** – A motion to approve the Dec. 11, 2025, drafted meeting minutes as presented was made by Armstrong and seconded by Commissioner Blissenbach. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
- **Board updates** –
 - Executive Director Leah Solo began the meeting by informing the board about the applications for a seat on the board as recorded by the Secretary of State’s website. There are two applications for the worker position and none for the employer position. Solo asked the members to reach out with questions or comments.
 - Solo reminded the board members they asked for a letter about the State Plan Amendment (SPA). Solo said the SPA was posted Dec. 8, 2025, and the end of the posting period is Jan. 8, 2026. When that period is done, staff members at the Department of Human Services will summarize the comments and send it to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS then has 90 days to ask for clarification or to deny or approve the SPA. Solo shared the short update she drafted and asked the board for feedback. No additional feedback was provided.
 - The board had previously asked for an update regarding the number of certified worker organization (CWO) training sessions that have happened and which CWO has been conducting them. Solo shared AFL-CIO has completed one training session and has one scheduled later in the month. AFL-CIO has called 73 homes and has heard from nine. AFSCME 65 has had three training sessions and has trained 32 workers. SEIU HC MN-IA has had one training session and is planning more. Paula Rocheleau said buildings may be waiting to see if the wages will be implemented before reaching out to schedule training. She asked if the CWO can charge for training, because some buildings have reached out to her communicating that message. Paul Enger, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) Office of General Counsel, pointed the board to Minnesota Statutes § 181.211, saying CWOs cannot be dominated or interfered with by any nursing home employer. Enger noted it would be up to the CWO how to proceed, that no application said or implied training would be contingent upon payment and, if a CWO did charge for training, the board would discuss responses to a CWO charging a facility for providing the training. Rocheleau also said some buildings have reported that one CWO says it will only train its own union members. Solo said yes, some CWO applications noted they would only train their union members or train only at sites at which they represented their members. The board looked at the webpage and saw that the discussed information is communicated on the current list of certified worker organizations, updated December 2025, on the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board webpage. Rocheleau noted this will create training and tracking challenges.
 - Solo gave the board a preview of the year, including the submission of the SPA in January and the approval hopefully being approved in March, April or May. The review of the curriculum will be added to the February meeting and the board will need to start reviewing the standards in March.
 - Solo walked through the sample curriculum updates, then the training guide with updates and then comments and revisions. She also reviewed the updated posting notification and asked if the board would like to recommend that the Certification/Training Workgroup work on it. Kim Brenne made a motion and Rocheleau seconded it. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
 - Solo updated the board on workgroups.
 - Data Workgroup: This group met earlier today and has proposed data-tracking measures it will share at the next meeting.

- Public Hearing Workgroup: No update now; meeting at the end of January.
- Certification/Training Workgroup: No update now; meeting in the middle of January.
- Solo was sent an email message from a member of the public who requested their message was read aloud to the board. The message said, “Tell the board it’s time to increase because everything is expensive and we need to be able to afford things.” Gulley asked if she received other specific email and said she heard from two nursing homes about the implementation of the standards.
- **New business** –
- **Next meeting** – The next meeting is at 11 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 12, in DLI’s Minnesota Room.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Rocheleau to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 a.m. and seconded by Armstrong. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.