

# Minutes: Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board

Date: Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026

Minutes prepared by: Linnea Pignatello and Carey Wagner

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

## Attendance

### Members present

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

### Visitors present

Jerome Balsimo  
Todd Bergstrom  
Jeff Bostic  
Lisa Jensen  
Kayla Revier (remotely)

### DLI staff members present

Paul Enger  
Ken McGurran  
Dave Skovholt  
Leah Solo  
Carey Wagner

## Agenda items

1. **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by Jamie Gulley at 11:02 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared.
2. **Approval of agenda** – A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Maria King and seconded by Mary Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Approval of drafted meeting minutes** – A motion to approve the Jan. 8, 2026, drafted meeting minutes as presented was made by King and seconded by Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
4. **Board updates** –
  - Leah Solo said the update of the State Plan Amendment (SPA) was submitted Jan. 9, with an anticipated response on or before April 9. Follow-up questions from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) may delay the response date. The Department of Human Services reported it has had an official call with CMS and CMS has not shared any concerns at this point. Communication regarding the status of the approval of the SPA went to the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board mailing list Jan. 12. Solo asked for feedback and Katie Lundmark said she is hearing skepticism the SPA will be approved and Swanson agreed.
  - Solo said there has been a hearing at the Eighth Circuit about the lawsuit regarding the holiday pay and date flexibility section. No ruling has been made and there is no anticipated timeline for a ruling. The rules are in effect unless and until a court rules otherwise.
  - King announced her retirement in July. She is working on identifying her replacement.
  - Workgroup updates
    - Certification/Training Workgroup: The group met and discussed the materials for the public hearing about curriculum requirements.
    - Data Workgroup: The group met and solidified its proposal. Solo reviewed the *Data Tracking Options* document at length regarding data access, data quality, data about hours and benefits, and data about Medicaid rates and costs. Solo also reviewed regional averages of retention and the regional average of pool by year and region. A motion was made by Nicole Blissenbach and seconded by King to approve the recommended sets of data to be collected. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
    - Public Hearing Workgroup: The group did not meet; there is no update other than the public hearing to be held later in this meeting.
    - Waivers and Variances Workgroup: The group did not meet; there are no updates at this time.
    - Wavier Review Workgroup: An application has been received after the deadline for the February meeting; the application will be reviewed during the March meeting.
5. **New business** –
  - **Public hearing:** Solo and Gulley introduced the public hearing; all members introduced themselves and their role in connection with the board. Gulley reminded the audience that this hearing is being recorded and a transcript will be available for public record. Ground rules and an overview of the hearing were provided.
  - Solo noted the major updates to the curriculum are: implementation of the dates of the 2026 wage standards; updating information about applicable laws to reflect implementation of paid leave in Minnesota; updates to break laws; and minor changes to language and graphics.
  - Solo said there have not been any requests in advance from the public to speak. Members of the public, both in the room and virtually, declined comment.
  - **Public comment received:** Solo said a nursing home employer sent a comment via email and a copy is in everyone's folder as a public record.
6. **Next meeting** – The next meeting is Thursday, March 12, 2026.

## **Adjournment**

A motion was made by King to adjourn the meeting at 11:35 a.m.; it was seconded by Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.