

Minutes: Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board

Date: Thursday, July 9, 2026

Minutes prepared by: Linnea Pignatello

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

Attendance

Members Present

Jason Anderson (remotely)
Michelle Armstrong
Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach
Kim Brenne
Sarah Grebenc (remotely)
Jamie Gulley (remotely)
Paula Rocheleau
Mary Swanson (joined at 11:02)

Visitors Present

Krystle Conley
Casey Murphy
Kayla Revier
Lillian VanDerPol

DLI Staff Present

Linnea Pignatello
Paul Enger
Ken McGurran
Josiah Moore
Leah Solo

Agenda items

1. **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by Chair 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 Michelle Armstrong 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 June 6, 2026, drafted meeting minutes as presented was made by Michelle Armstrong and seconded by Mary Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Board updates –

- The board heard from new board member Sarah Grebenc.
- Commissioner Blissenbach announced her appointment to the Hennepin County District Court bench.
- Informal follow up questions from Department of Human Services (DHS) about the State Plan Amendment (SPA) indicating CMS is looking at it. August 12 is the deadline for response. There are no further updates currently. No information from the Department of Human Services about the bonus legislation or implementation. There may be an update at next month's meeting.
- Solo updated the group on the connection between Leading Age, Care Providers, and Minnesota Training Partnership to help more workers get trained. A GovDelivery was also sent out to remind people of resources available and training deadlines.
- Last month there was a question on other organizations that would qualify to be Certified Worker Organization's (CWO's) that are not unions. Solo presented the organizations she found. Gulley asked if the employers on the board have scheduled training at their facilities, employers answered no and Gulley encouraged them to pilot the trainings so the board can hear what was successful and what the barriers were.
- Workgroup reports:
 - i. Certification, Training and Public Engagement
 - Reviewed recertification curriculum and draft applications.
 - Discussed additional public forums but determined these should occur after SPA approval, likely mid-September.
 - Proposed forum locations presented by staff:
 - a. **Brainerd:** Public Library preferred due to parking and accessibility.
 - b. **Rochester:** Public Library's parking concerns noted; Rochester Community & Technical College identified as a primary option pending communication. The board preferred a location not in downtown. Staff will look into this.
 - c. **Metro Hybrid Option:** Preferred location is DLI due to technical readiness and parking.
 - ii. Data and Waiver
 - Data pull coming in July. Additional data is expected in August.
 - A lot of work on the survey
 - a. PT, OT, and Speech- not reported on the cost report and reimbursed through 256R
 - No waiver requests
- Reviewed draft survey
 - i. A motion to approve with the caveat that staff can make appropriate edits was made by Paula Rocheleau, seconded by Mary Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was passed unanimously.

5. New business –

- **Retirement Plan Research Presentation**
 - i. Staff reviewed publicly posted employer retirement benefit information, CBA retirement plan provisions and found 83% of facilities advertised a retirement plan; 64% advertised

an employer match. A majority offered 401(k)/403(b) plans, with some variation including pensions, IRAs, and deferred compensation. Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA) participation was clarified: city/county-owned facilities generally required to use PERA, but contractors are excluded.

- ii. Board discussed whether retirement should become a standard. There were concerns about employee participation, plan match requirements, workforce demographics, and turnover.

- **Retirement Plan Proposal**

- i. Board reviewed draft proposal options outlining potential retirement plan standards, including auto-enrollment, minimum employer contributions, hour thresholds, and accounting for defined benefit plans.

Discussion included:

- Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) constraints; legal review needed.
 - Vesting periods and restrictions.
 - Administrative challenges with hour-based eligibility thresholds.
 - Need for fairness for part-time vs full-time workers.
 - Reimbursement caps and feasibility within DHS fiscal analysis.

Members agreed to continue discussion at the next meeting and solicit additional proposal options.

- 6. **Next meeting** – Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 11 a.m. in the Minnesota Room at the Department of Labor and Industry.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Blissenbach to adjourn the meeting at 12:29 p.m. and seconded by Mary Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.