

Minutes: Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board

Date: Thursday, Oct. 9, 2025

Minutes prepared by: Linnea Pignatello

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

Attendance

Members present	Visitors present	DLI staff members present
Michelle Armstrong		Linnea Becerra
Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach		Paul Enger
Kim Brenne (remotely, joined at 11:08 a.m.)		Ken McGurran
Michele Fredrickson		Leah Solo
Jamie Gulley		
Maria King (remotely)		
Katie Lundmark		
Paula Rocheleau (remotely)		
Mary Swanson (remotely)		

Agenda items

- 1. Call to order** – the meeting was called to order by Jamie Gulley at 11:02 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 Maria King and seconded by Michele Fredrickson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
- 3. Approval of drafted meeting minutes** – a motion to approve the Sept. 11, 2025, drafted meeting minutes as presented was made by King and seconded by Fredrickson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
- 4. Board updates** –
 - Executive Director Leah Solo informed the board she will work on calling nursing home administrators after this meeting, after the waiver and variance application is approved by the board.
 - The Certification/Training Workgroup update was that the deadline for workers to be trained was mailed in the newsletter sent by Solo this past week.
 - The Data Workgroup update was that the group has continued to review data sources and is hopeful a recommendation will be made soon. The data recommendation would then come to the full board for discussion.
 - The Public Hearing Workgroup update was that registration information for the upcoming public forums went out in the newsletter. Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach asked how the board will decide to cancel the forum due to low registration. The board decided to have a deadline for

registrants to respond and if too few people register, the event will be canceled. Those registrants who did sign up would then be directed to the hybrid forum in St. Paul. Solo will send a note to respond and the webpage will be updated with these registration deadlines.

- The update from the Waivers and Variances Workgroup is that the goal is to have an updated application by the end of this meeting. This would allow facilities time to apply before the minimum wages could go into effect. Solo walked through the highlighted changes to the application the workgroup made. Gulley suggested moving optional questions to the bottom of the list (financial status). Commissioner Blissenbach suggested clarifying that if a waiver or variance is granted, then the public will be notified. Commissioner Blissenbach also suggested adding a spot for the applicant to certify that absent the waiver or variance requested, the facility will be at risk of closure or receivership. A motion to approve the application and to allow staff members to make grammatical and formatting changes was made by King and seconded by Commissioner Blissenbach. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
- Solo explained the purpose of the evaluation tool is to help board members assess waiver and variance applications. The tool would be used to guide discussion and for members to organize their thoughts about each section of the application. If members write on the tool, those annotated documents will be a part of the public record. There was much discussion around this and, in the end, Executive Director Solo encouraged members to review the evaluation tool and provide feedback directly to Solo via email.
- Solo introduced a follow-up document that outlines a process for notifying applicants of incomplete submissions, follow-up questions and timelines to ensure decisions are made within statutory deadlines.
- The board discussed the length of variance or waiver that should be given, specifically, whether to establish a standard length or time period or instead treat waivers and variances on a case-by-case basis, with each applicant receiving a different time period. It was raised that overly complex or partial waivers may complicate enforcement and one-year variances and waivers seem most appropriate in most circumstances. More discussion will occur in the workgroup and can be brought to future board meetings.

5. New business –

- Paula Rocheleau requested an update from the certified worker organizations (CWOs) about their progress in training workers. Solo suggested she would reach out to the contact person at each CWO to check on its progress and offer help or suggestions.
- Solo indicated she intended to share a draft of the board's statutorily required annual report at the next board meeting in November.

6. Next meeting – the next meeting is Friday, Nov. 21, at 10 a.m., in the Minnesota Room.

Adjournment

A motion was made by King to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 p.m. and seconded by Rocheleau. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.