Testimony by John Zwiers, COO, Broen Home, Fergus Falls

Supporting HF 162

House Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care Policy

March 4, 2015

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee,

My name is John Zwiers, and I am COO of the Broen Home in Fergus Falls.

I want to highlight the pay disparity issue we face with the wages we are able to offer and what the Minnesota Veterans Home is able to pay.

We start a Nursing Assistant at $2.00 an hour less than at the Minnesota Veterans Home. If that Nursing Assistant stays with us for 16 years, he or she makes $8.00 an hour less than they would make at the Minnesota Veterans Home. That is for the very same job in the same kind of facility — a Nursing Assistant in a long-term care facility.

An LPN starts out at $2.50 to almost $4.00 an hour less and the gap quickly grows. By the end of 11 years, an LPN is making $8.00 to $9.00 less per hour at one of our facilities. That is $18,000 less per year if that person works for us rather than at the Minnesota Veterans Home.

An RN starts with us for $6.00 an hour less and in ten years, they are making $15.00 to $17.00 less per hour. After ten years, that RN is making $31,000 to $35,000 less per year if they work for us — the very same position in the same kind of long-term care facility.

Wages at the Minnesota Veterans Home are set by a statewide contract based on Twin Cities wages. The wages we are able to offer are much lower because the State Long-Term Care Peer Groupings classifies us as deep rural. Yet we are being forced to compete against urban wages for the very same jobs. We can’t.

And this doesn’t include the benefits the State offers to Minnesota Veterans Home employees.

We need you help in solving this problem. It is an issue of fairness.

Thank you for this opportunity to highlight the especially difficult situation our group of long-term care facilities face, inadvertently created by the State, and we urge your support of HF 167.

Thank you.

**2014 Nursing Wage Comparison   
Minnesota Veterans Home,   
Pioneer Care, Broen Home and Battle Lake Good Samaritan**

**Nursing Asst Start 16 Yrs**

MN Vets Home 13.28 21.06

Pioneer Care 11.27 13.07

Broen Home 11.34 13.24

BL Good Sam 10.39 n/a

**LPN Start 11-12 Yrs**

MN Vets Home 17.85 25.45

Pioneer Care 15.37 17.28

Broen Home 14.79 16.74

BL Good Sam 14.00 15.85

**RN Staff Start 10 Yrs**

MN Vets Home 26.25 38.86

Pioneer Care 20.00 21.79

Broen Home 20.30 23.13

BL Good Sam 19.75 22.36





