

May 1, 2023

Dear Members of the Omnibus Human Services Finance Bill Conference Committee,

I write to you today on behalf of the patients, families, and nurses of Aveanna Healthcare, an agency serving the home nursing needs of high-acuity, medically fragile patients throughout Minnesota. My name is Darla Thompson, and I am the Aveanna Area Vice President of Operations and also serve on the Board of Directors for the Minnesota Home Care Association.

Aveanna provides essential nursing services in coordination with specialty physicians to ensure our pediatric and adult patients are safe and can thrive at home. Home care agencies proved to be an invaluable, collaborative resource during the pandemic. We continue to be part of the solution in getting patients home and safely keeping them there which is clearly more cost-effective for the State than prolonged stays in hospitals.

Unfortunately, the disparity that we are experiencing in wages for nurses has impacted our ability to hire an adequate number of nurses needed to meet the demand for our services. Consequently, our inability to hire nurses due to market wage pressure has also led to increases in the hospital lengths of stay which in some cases is up to 800% due to the of lack of availability home care nursing for these medically complex patients.

In one family's story their child was ready clinically to go home. They waited in the NICU for four extra months which created an unnecessary fiscal impact of over \$600K . Why, because we could not hire nurses due to the low reimbursement rates. We can do better, and we can only fix this together.

We appreciate the focus this session has had on the home care access crisis in Minnesota and cannot impress upon you the value that an additional increase of 55% to the Medicaid rates for nursing would make for our patients, families and nurses. Not only would we be able to hire more nurses but also provide additional hours of care to patients who are receiving minimal care coverage. The investment in Home Care Nursing is critical and we ask for your support in ensuring that this increase be adopted.

A window into what we do every day:

Must see WCCO TV News spotlight that demonstrates Home Care Nursing:

[Families struggle to bring home babies during nurse shortage - YouTube](#)



SINCERELY,



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