

Northeast

Thomas David, DePere

My wife cannot move her arms or legs. We used to get someone to come in for 2.5 hours in the morning so I could do some shopping and do other necessary things outside the home. Due to the poor pay the quality of the care givers went down to the point we couldn't use them. My health deteriorated to the point where I could no longer take care of her so we had to get her into a nursing home.

Lisa Schneider, Appleton

we have had to rely on family and friends to provide care and transportation. And now sit on at least 3 different wait lists for supports with various providers - all of whom state they are having major difficulty in obtaining and retaining staff. This is not sustainable for planning for Kelsey's future. I can plan all I want, have in place what Kelsey wants and needs, but its all moot if there is no workers. And not just ANY workers, we want and need caring, compassionate, trained, fairly-paid workers who want to provide cares that are required, desired, and meaningful.

Jessica Kimball, Fond du Lac

Our agency currently has a 60% turnover rate, and at least 40% of the turnover is attributed to wages. Caregivers simply cannot afford to live on \$13. 50 per hour. Due to turnover, we have been forced to decrease programming, turn individuals with disabilities away from our programs, and create waiting lists. We receive calls daily for residential placement, because so many other providers have had to close their door, due to lack of funding.

Nanette Scudder, Sturgeon Bay

We don't know what will happen to Mary when we are no longer able to do all the coordinating, paperwork, and physical & emotional supports needed. As we age, it is getting harder to keep up and I am getting forgetful and tire more easily. At some point we will probably need help for ourselves. We had hoped to be able to back out of most of the responsibilities and just become her parents, instead of Providers by the time she was 21 (11 years ago) or by the time we reached retirement age. Realistically we probably cannot outlive Mary and common to our age health issues would be causing us to deteriorate and be incapable of continuing to provide care.

Lanna Kankiss, Green Bay

I have been caregiver for my wife, 6 years, during that time, my wife has been in intensive care, 15 times, on a respirator, because of COPD. I had performed CPR, 3 times, before the ambulance came. This is a 24/7 job, now averages 1-3 nights in hospital, each month. I am a former Physicians Assistant, Respiratory Therapy Technician, I can only claim 40 hrs. a week at \$13.50 per hour. Literally, life saving at times, to keep my wife out of a nursing home.

Shanda Hubertus, Clintonville

Prior to the COVID pandemic, we would receive 10+ applications for an open position and had the ability to choose the right fit for the clients. We now get one applicant for every 10 positions that we are trying to fill, and the quality of the applicants has SIGNIFICANTLY declined.

Stacey Ellingen, Oshkosh

I currently have 25 out of 55 of my care shifts open in April. On multiple occasions, I've skipped meals, not been able to use the restroom for hours on-end, and slept in my wheelchair because I didn't have caregivers. My parents are getting older and it's getting harder and harder for them to care for me. Not only is it harder, it's also unfair to them. They deserve to enjoy their retirement, but they're unable to because they constantly have to be there to help me. At not even 40 years old,, daily,, I wonder how much longer before I'll have to move into a nursing home.

Sara MacDonald, Little Chute

My ideal life would include being able to work throughout the day full-time and then come home to take care of my daughter. However, despite sharing some responsibilities for the care of my daughter with her dad, I do not have enough assistance to work a full-time job. This is upsetting and unfortunate for me, but I'm a trained social worker, and so it is also a loss for the state.

Edward Kastern, Oshkosh

I was in nursing home last year and I'm afraid that I might have to go back again because there's not enough caregivers

Meghan Haus, Appleton

I love my son but he's at an age where he would normally be independent and looking to move out of the house. I would love to have enough help so my husband and I could sleep, work, attend events with our other kids, and travel occasionally without so much difficulty.

North and Northwest

Elizabeth McKluskey, Tomahawk

My husband is in the 5th year of Frontotemporal Dementia and Parkinsonism, his prognosis is 7.5 years. I expect that he will need nursing care within the next 2 years. I am terrified of putting him in long term care because I am keenly aware of the situations existing in facilities, private and funded. I know I'll lose my financial security because he'll need Medical Assistance to pay the bills. I see a bleak future for both of us.

Lloyd DeGroot, Eagle River

When it comes to providing care for my son, it has become more difficult due to my own disability. With hours of the caregiver that comes in having been cut it's even harder providing cares that are needed. Because of my knees it's hard to meet the needs of my son at times.

Samantha Lotts, Bloomer

I get referrals every day for consumers within our 10 county service territory that need caregivers to help them remain independent in their own homes. For every 12 referrals I get, I can fill one of those positions with a caregiver.

Ginger Deschane, Crivitz

I have disabled foster kids. I may have to stop fostering if I can't get enough help

Lisa Kuchinski, Maiden Rock

There are NO care givers in the area where I live, we are rural western WI. Nick's brother and sister have altered their lives to help care for their brother. My income has been decreased dramatically causing a hardship for me. I have had to quit my job to stay home and care for Nick.

Southeast

Mary Cerreti, Racine

I am terrified for my health decline and what this will mean for my son's rights and his freedom.

Holly Schaefer, Elkhorn

I am a live-in caregiver of 7 years, totaling 13 years of 1:1 care of a young man with Autism. When I first began working for this individual, we had a team of 5-6 caregivers that would work regular or occasional shifts. In the past two years, between the family and myself, we have contacted over 60 eligible workers and have found zero to join our team of now only myself and one part time caregiver. I am exhausted from working 60-70 hour weeks in addition to every overnight shift from 8p-8a. I have zero healthcare benefits offered, no paid time off for holidays or vacations/personal days, and no overtime benefits regardless of how many hours I work beyond a normal 40 hour workweek. I often have to cancel my plans because caregivers call in or his day program takes days off without telling me ahead of time.

Rachel Crites, Milwaukee

I am a licensed midwife but have not been able to work for the last 4 years as I have had to fill in for my son. The caregiving responsibilities have interfered with my ability to keep up and meet the responsibilities of my license and without additional support so I can shift my focus, my professional certification is in jeopardy of lapsing.

Brooklynn Moede, Wauwatosa

I have 4 year old twins who bring us so much joy. One of them, William, is disabled. I had to quit my full time job to be his full time caregiver. My husband works and we struggle monthly with basic finances due to only having 1 income. My physical, and mental health have declined in the past 4 years due to the constant stress, exhaustion, anxiety and trauma that comes with caring for a medically complex child.

Robin Jennifer Scott, Waukesha

I am a single mother and domestic abuse survivor. I am raising four young children alone; the youngest two have Down syndrome and complex medical needs/high needs. There's a constant state of anxiety which I battle.

Paige Gagliano, Oconomowoc Lake

I am 62 years old and am about to be homeless. This will could mean that two of my clients will go into group homes. I cannot find affordable housing. I have lived working for the last 10 years without benefits. I work hard why do I have to live in poverty?

Diana Rice, Mukwonago

I had a caregiver for my son for 6 1/2 years, but left for a job that paid the same but had benefits! I am not alone, I have friends who have lost there workers because of benefits. Also the workers that are left are unreliable. It is hard to find good people that you can trust to leave your child with. If my caregiver of 6 1/2 years had benefits I would still have her!

Sonja Hintz, Walworth

I care for my medically complex adult child, age 29. She relies on my being an RN to stay in her own home. She has a jtube, gtube, and central line. As a result most agency help will not take her on. So I work part-time and for her as well. I am unable to hold down a full time job as a result and need built in flexibility which I have. My "day job" as a result is not in nursing.

Lisa Zohert, West Bend

Being a caregiver is a job that requires a certain kind of individual. We must be able to encourage more people to seek out this kind of work by offering them a fair wage for what is required. We have an urgent need for empathy, support, and consistency. As aging parents, it is vital for us to know that we have good caregivers in place that can help provide those things when we are no longer able.

Scott Briese, Port Washington

Our family had to make a decision as to which parent was going to end their career to care for our adult son with a disability. We just could not find or keep reliable caregivers to care for him.

Julie Burish, Brookfield

At three different time within the past three years we have lost ALL of our support workers...down to ZERO = no support! This leads to my husband and I having to providing ALL of our daughter's support needs. I spend most of my day focused solely on making her life work and I feel overwhelmed, stressed

and I lose sleep every night worrying about how this is ever going get better! She needs a safe and stable life in the community where she wants to live...not in a facility because we can't find staff.

Phillip Corona, Cudahy

When it comes to providing care for my son, it has become more difficult due to my own disability. With hours of the caregiver that comes in having been cut it's even harder providing cares that are needed. Because of my knees it's hard to meet the needs of my son at times.

Central

Anthony Galvan, Wausau

I am grateful for this job. I am able to provide care and spend time with my sickly ill mother. English was her 3rd language. I do a lot of the translating with what little Hmong I know. It is very difficult to work with her because I do not know Hmong fully. The lack of not understanding English is causing her downfall. The state has cut my hours, it makes it difficult to provide everything she needs.

Jeff Broadwell, Plover

My caregiver never came for their shift, and I hadn't eaten or used the restroom in 24 hours.

SouthCentral and Southwest

Kelly Kreig-Seigman, LaCrosse

I am the sole caregiver for a husband with MS in a wheelchair and an 88-year-old mother who moved in with us during COVID. The "good" news is that I was able to retire at 60 in order to care for them, but the "bad" news is that as I age, my ability to continue my caregiver role will gradually deteriorate.

Laurine Lusk, Belleville

My husband and I are parents and legal guardians for an adult daughter who has autism, physical disabilities, anxiety disorder, and PTSD. My husband and I are several years beyond retirement age and my husband has failing health and needs my support as a caregiver. If we had the 401-k or other saved wages from maximizing my husband's and my lifetimes of earning, our financial and also our health status would be far different now. My husband and I are of retirement age but we lack the funds to fully retire.

Barbara Vedder, Madison

i'm quadriplegic, paralyzed from my chest down and i live with my husband on the near east side of Madison, WI. i need people to help me every morning and evening. i have no one to help me two

mornings/week and five evenings/week. my husband is 76 years old and cannot do but is forced into doing my cares since there is no one else.

Amanda Pardo, Lodi

family caregiving is an unpaid business, and my family's financial stability has been affected by my inability to work. I coordinate all services for my son, often spending hours on the phone only to be denied. My son has been forced onto Medicaid since I can't work and care for him, meaning I don't have a job with health insurance. This further complicates our situation, as he often does not get services that would help him because some services will not accept Medicaid.

Meghan Lowe, Merrimac

I cannot work outside of the home and earn an income because of my daughter's complex medical condition. My student loans are accruing interest, I owe more than I originally took out bc I cannot make monthly payments bc I have no way to make income.

Chad Sobiek, Madison

My caregiver has had attendance issues in the past for me. That means my laundry doesn't get done meals don't get made with means I'm scrambling to figure out where my next meal is coming from.

Donald Katz, Madison

My son's caregivers are burning out from working too many hours because there are too few of them. And they are rushed and grumpy. As a family caregiver, we end up filling some hours in order to give them breaks, which is stressful for us (I am now 70)

Liz Hellenbrand, Middleton

As an unpaid family caregiver to my son with autism, I spent 17+ years coordinating his care with his care team. by spending my days caring for my son I did not pay into social security or a 401K leaving me w/o a retirement fund for myself. I am forever stuck homebound as I continue to try to meet his daily needs. My dreams of traveling and starting my own career (as a middle-aged adult) will forever be put on hold.

Dee Corker, Rockdale

I worked as a direct care worker from 1992-2007 and had to leave because I didn't make enough to support myself and two kids without having to have two additional part-time jobs. I came back to this profession in 2022 because I love the people I work with, and I no longer have a family I need to support. I still need to work at a second job to be able to afford working in this profession.

Mary Ellen Lewis, Jefferson

I care for my mom who has Alzheimer's/dementia. It is getting harder because she doesn't sleep at night she wanders. We have equipped our home to make sure she can't leave. I will be taking her to CA in May so my sister can help. She will put her in a memory facility for 3 months. That will empty my mom's account.

Sue Zefrik, Madison

We have been unable to hire and retain employees. I have never experienced this much stress. Our managers are covering open spots on a daily basis as well as doing our job. This is causing burnout! Clients have been unable to return to their community jobs because we do not have staff to provide the support they need. We have a long waiting list of individuals searching for services.

Tiffany Glass, Madison

For two years one of our son's personal care assistants (PCA) lived with us. She joined our household after we discovered her PCA wages were not sufficient for her to afford to pay rent in her original apartment. At other times we have cycled through different PCAs rapidly. The caregiving crisis is very hard on our family and our son. It is emotionally draining to have such severe structural instability in a position that is so closely integrated in daily family life and personal care.