

House Committee on Finance and Appropriate

Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

Testimony of Tierra V. Richerson

Direct Support Professional- Empowering People Inc.

Years of services fourteen years.

March 14th

Hello, My name is Tierra V. Richerson. I'm an direct support professional at Empowering People Inc. Before I continue, I would like to thank you, for the opportunity to share my testimony today. I have been employed for fourteen years with Empowering People Inc. I'm a wife, mother of two children, licensed minister and a Sunday school teacher. I enjoy many things that comes along with being a direct support professional. Mostly what I enjoy, is knowing that I'm apart of making a difference in the lives, of the people that I serve. Helping them with task, that they are not capable of doing it themselves.

Over the years as times begin to change, the health field industry has decreased in a shortage of employee's . Which has left health care agencies working short handed, with only one or two staff, on a shift at a time. All while trying to meet the care and needs, of the people that we serve. The amount of work responsibilities, that is expected for the wages that we receive as an employee, who is taking care of another human being lives is shameful. These individuals that live in health care agencies have experienced countless, of employees walking out on them due to the wages, not supporting the high intensity responsibilities of the work duties. Taking time away from our own families, to work overtime for reason such as, there is no one else to work, and also because we as employees, do not make enough financially to survive of regular wages.

As an health care provider, I most certainly understand the pressure, the emotional stress, and the overwhelming feeling, of being over worked. The duties of an direct support professional, goes beyond care. Yes, we administrate medications, cook, clean, do laundry, shower, run doctor

appointments, all for the residents. But there is also the behavioral issues aspect that comes along with this. Getting physically attacked, spited on, and verbally assaulted at any giving moment, while performing our job duties, can be an unpleasant feeling. This line of work comes with many challenges. I choose to stay because, I know that some of these individuals don't fully understand, why they have behavioral issues. I do not wish, to continue the pattern of the employees in the past, and give up on these individuals by walking out on them. My devoted fourteen years spent, providing care services for them, represent that my heart is passionate about the job that I do. My only request is that we as health care providers, get the proper wages that we deserve, not by just what we are saying here today, but by our time and years of act of service, that we have invested for the lives of the individuals that we serve.