

Melinda Stephens  
Testimony on HB 33  
Supporting the DD Workforce

I have been in the DD field for 17 years. I currently work as a Nurse, DSP, and Regional Director for an HPC provider. HPC providers are the heart and soul of this field. We work with smiles, tears, hugs, being hit, helping them through time of need, being yelled and cussed at, perform ADL's, teach others to be independent with ADL's, etc. It is never ending. I have personally dealt with burn out, my team not thinking I'm doing enough to support them, being yelled at by my employees because they are frustrated and burnt out, sacrificed time with my own family that I can't get back, and have had tension in my own home due to working so frequently. You can get a job in the fast food industry, where you know your schedule in advance, when you're off work you are off work, and make more money than you can to care for people, work insane hours due to staffing shortages, and never know when you're going to be called in. I know strides have been made, but it is also dictated where the money goes. Provider costs continue to increase with no increased compensation. Managers, such as myself, work around the clock and side by side with DSP's without being able to be compensated anymore due to everything being dictated. I personally have DSP's who make more money than I do as a Nurse and Regional Director. They deserve to make a decent wage, but I do as well. Just because I am a manager does not mean that I just get to work a nice desk job Monday through Friday first shift hours. I am side by side with my team to help prevent them from burning out and giving them time off on call 24/7. Provider agencies as a whole need and deserve more. Trust needs to lie within us to know we would adequately put monies where needed. Without management, residential providers would not exist. With that being said, HPC providers also need to be able to hire at a more competitive wage to able to hire and retain employees.