

I have a 27 yr old disabled son that lives at home with me (mom), his younger sister and brother. My son has a lot of physical disabilities ranging from a trach to a gtube, and is considered full care. He is allowed to have RN's and LPN care in the home while I work, but we cannot find any nurses. My son should really have more nursing hours than he does due to the trach and the oxygen he uses, but I cannot get more nursing hours for him. This makes things very difficult and draining especially since I am a single mother that has to work full time and care for my other two children, and care for my disabled son every minute when I am not working.

Our nursing agency is Maxim, who has been finding nurses to care for my son at home. Over the last few years, especially since Covid, it has been extremely difficult to find nurses to care for our son. We have had four excellent nurses and in the past year, all four of them have quit. Their reasons have been that the pay for working in home care is so low, they cannot afford to stay. One nurse left to work at the prison with better pay and benefits, the other went to the jail for the same reason, another went to a school district in Lucas County for better benefits and the last one just left for better pay at a nursing home. This now leaves us with ZERO nurses, and no prospects at all. How am I supposed to work to support my family, and take care of my disabled son 24/7? I do not have any family to help, so I have to depend on nursing care.

We want to be a family and keep the family together, where my son can heal and progress to being independent again. Love and healing is at home with family. We do not want my son in a nursing home as we know the care he would receive there is well below satisfactory, he would not be making the advancements he is now and he would surely perish.

Home health care agencies and independent providers need to have competitive wages, access to affordable benefits, vacation and holiday time and pay and shift differential. When the nurses we had needed a day off for medical reasons, or vacation, they just did not get paid, no vacation time or sick time at all. The nurses we have had at our home have to be extremely responsible and intelligent, and be a charge nurse all day. Their responsibilities far exceed anything that a nurse would do in a nursing home, and home care nurses should be paid accordingly. I think \$25 an hour would be the minimum considering the knowledge and responsibilities of home care nurses. Benefits need to be included with every job. Our nurses never had vacation or holiday pay, no shift differential for working evenings or nights, and no option to receive medical benefits. All the medical benefits offered were extremely expensive.

We are at the point now, where I do not have any nurses to care for my son. I am not sure what we are going to do. He is thriving at home and we have everything here he needs except help from nurses to care for him while I work. Goodness, we aren't asking for much, just that the homecare nurses get better pay and benefits. Working with The Ability Center in Sylvania, Ohio, I have learned that it is clearly financially beneficial to all, if people stay in their home, where they want to be, instead of a nursing home.

Please, please pay the home care nurses a much better wage with benefits. They deserve it and our families deserve it too.

Thank you.

Mary Clark