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Testimony for Assembly Bill 76

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In November, the Washington County Board passed 2018 Resolution 57 to support this legislation. Last session, an exact bill was introduced, which passed the Assembly. The bill federalizes Wisconsin's 120 classroom hours for CNAs. Federal regulations and neighboring states require 45 fewer hours. The goal of the legislation is to ensure quality CNA candidates quickly enter the pipeline and are on the nursing floor learning the facility culture and residents' needs. Wisconsin faces a shortfall of qualified CNA and other nursing aides. Washington County's Samaritan Campus has approximately twenty openings for CNAs.

The entire change for the bill is this: *The department may not require additional instructional hours to exceed the federal required minimum under 42 CFR 483.152 (a).*

Because most regulations for skilled nursing facilities are written and enforced by the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, using the federal standard makes sense. Under the bill, should the federal standard change, so would Wisconsin's. Elsewhere in Wisconsin regulations, it is not required for all nursing aides to be certified. For instance, some assisted living facilities may hire nursing aides who are not registered. This is the case in Washington County's Samaritan Campus as we have both assisted living and skilled nursing facilities.

For about thirty years, the federal government has required states to create nursing aid training programs and establish requirements for competency. For most of those years, Wisconsin required the federal standard of 75 hours. The CNA training hour requirement is written in administrative rule and has not been set by the Legislature. It is important for Wisconsin and neighboring states to have similar rules to encourage reciprocity and qualification as CNAs move around the country.

Many aging advocacy groups are opposed to this legislation. These groups will testify that they would like to see more clinical hours for CNAs to ensure the highest quality of care for residents. The groups suggest that clinical hours improve resident lives. We agree. This is why we have a robust on-the-job training program. The reality is CNAs who participate in strong on-the-job training learn the culture of the facility while learning technical aspects of the job. For instance, a "Hoyer lift" may not be the same product in every facility. Hoyer is a brand for a floor or sit-to-stand lift. Prior to my career in public policy, I learned this difference when I was at Direct Supply selling lifts to facilities across the country.

Washington County takes great pride in our mission and our vision statements. Our mission requires our employees to create an environment to "enjoy our authentic quality of life through ... access to basic needs." The time it takes each CNA to comfortably achieve this mission varies and should not be overregulated.

All administrators care about their residents and want the best treatment possible. This bill would do nothing to lower the standard of care that Washington County Samaritan Health Center residents and families have come to know. Samaritan Campus will maintain a robust on-the-job training to ensure our care standards are met. We urge you to pass this legislation to give homes more flexibility hire the right people for the job.

Respectfully submitted by Ethan Hollenberger

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