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*Indra Crespo, Personal Care Assistant*

Bill 6668

Human Services Committee Hearing, 3/17/2009

My consumer amazes me. Truly. She is paralyzed from the neck down. She has her motorized chair and her whole house is set up so that she can move in and out with no problem. She speaks through a voice machine She's so organized- she runs her own business and everything. To me, she's an amazing example of what someone can do when they set their mind to it. There are several PCAs that help her. At first when I started working with her I used to just bathe her one of the days I was there. She was so impressed with my skill and gentle manner that she switched her schedule around so only I would bathe her. She has a feeding tube and a colostomy bag and a foley, so she needs regular assistance with some things.

It's a lot of work! Since the hours can only ever be part time and there are no benefits and the pay is low, I'd never give up my full time job in the nursing home to work with her. Even if I took on another client or two- I'd be working just as hard as I do in the nursing home without the stability, pay and benefits I need to raise my family. In the end I wanted to spend more time with my family so I told her I was going to decrease my hours and just do backup when she needed it.

We are very close. When I finally told her I couldn't keep up the hours, that it was such strenuous work for so little, I promised her that I would stay doing backup for her if her other PCAs couldn't cover the shifts.

She was upset that I had to leave; she started interviewing people all over again. Because the PCA workforce is so unstable, consumers are used to juggling schedules and racing around to cover call outs and find backup, but it shouldn't have to be that hard. I know my consumer told me that when she's been in a bind and unable to get any PCAs she had to call friends or family members that she normally wouldn't want to put in that position and ask them to help her.

I believe that by passing the quality home care council, we can will have the ability to improve how the system is set up and make it easier for the consumers and the PCAs.