

Elizabeth Tilman, Personal Care Assistant
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011

My name is Elizabeth Tilman and I've been a CNA since 1988. I started out working in a nursing home but in 2005 I switched to doing PCA work. When I was working in the nursing home I earned \$15-16 an hour. As a PCA I make just \$12.39. I took the pay cut because I enjoy working personally with people, just one-on-one.

Right now I have only one client, just 11 hours. She found me through the Allied registry and I've been taking care of her for two years. I'm on that registry still, looking for more clients so I can get closer to full-time hours. I'm really hoping someone will call soon, I haven't received any calls lately. The last person who called me I couldn't do the hours because my current client overlapped. I'm also working in maintenance in a furniture store for 24-26 hours a week. I have to work that second job so that I can pay my bills.

I don't have health insurance. Two weeks ago I got sick with bronchitis and I had to take off so I only worked two hours that week. I've had to save up here and there when I can for when this happens since I don't get paid for the hours I missed. It's only with God's grace and mercy that I get through. I went to the hospital because I was so sick and I had to pay out of pocket of the hospital. They only billed me \$150 because I'm blessed and God has opened up doors for me. It could have been much worse and I'm thankful for these blessings. I told them I didn't have medical insurance and that bill could have easily been \$2000-3000 since I had to have breathing treatments and everything.

My medicine costs a lot too, one prescription is \$181. My other is \$60. But through God and his grace I got in a program where I pay \$4 and \$7 for those, otherwise I wouldn't be able to afford it. This is a program through the pharmaceutical people.

It's not a good feeling that I take care of others but can't take care of myself. It's frustrating because right now I need a coloscopy and the government funds have run out for that. It's \$2000. I really need this done but I can't afford it. My health isn't being properly cared for, and that's not a good thing. I need to know what's going on before it's too late. I need dental work done too and I need to figure out a way to get that done so that it doesn't cost an arm and a leg. Some programs have certain times that they give reduced cost and if you miss it you miss out.

People need to have medical care. I care for others, I need to be able to care for myself. I hope we can create this workforce council so that PCAs can come together and get some health insurance. If our health fails we're going to fail our clients, and that is very sad. We need to fix this.