

Tyree Winfrey, Home Care Client
Bill 6486
Human Services Committee, March 8, 2011

My name is Tyree Winfrey and I've been a home care consumer for about 11-12 years. Before that my mom took care of me, and I lived at home. At that point, I had aides who worked for a private agency come take care of me when my mom couldn't. Then I moved to a nursing home, but I needed more independence. I worked with my social worker to find my own place and then got into the PCA program and hiring my own caregivers.

Home care is important to me because it helps me with my daily activities. Without home care I would be forced to move to a nursing home. I'm 31 and a nursing home isn't the place for me.

I've had a lot of caregivers, really over 20. I find my caregivers through Allied. Sometimes I have trouble finding people because some people on their list are not available. I've had trouble with people quitting. Most caregivers stay for just a couple months. Sometimes they're not willing to do the work or they are unreliable or don't come on time.

It's stressful to have to find and train new caregivers every six months or so. It's frustrating to have new people come in and I have to show them how to take care of me. It's hard to trust new people- I don't know if they'll be able to stick around and take care of me right. I have had a few caregivers that have stuck around a long time. They're willing to do what they are supposed to do, and we have become friends. They're still with me.

Right now I have three caregivers, including my mom, who split time during the week. If one of my caregivers gets sick I have to have a backup come in. Right now that's hard because it's hard to find backup that can be reliable, especially for overnights. If there's no backup I have to call a friend of mine to help out.

The system is just frustrating. I need more hours, for starters, so that I can get the care I need to really thrive. I need healthcare benefits for PCAs. I think with health benefits, our caregivers will stick around longer. They need benefits, better pay, sick days, and vacation. It's hard work and they're not being given enough to show how important it is. That's why they always leave.

I hope our lawmakers can pass a bill to make it possible for us to fix this frustrating system.