



Testimony for House Bill 1012

Senate Appropriations – Human Resources Division

Senator Dick Dever, Chairman

Good morning. My name is Giselle Ishimwe, and I am the CEO, Nurse, and Coordinator at A Place To Call Home LLC, an adult foster care agency in Fargo, North Dakota. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1012 and to share insights from my experience as a provider.

I strongly support the Adults and Aging Services budget proposals under House Bill 1012. As a provider in Fargo, I have firsthand experience with the essential role these services play in supporting individuals with diverse and complex needs.

A Place To Call Home LLC has been serving the Fargo community since 2024, offering 24/7 skilled nursing care, transportation, respite care, companionship, homemaker services, personal care, community support, and residential habilitation. Over the past year, we have cared for individuals with a wide range of medical conditions and behavioral challenges, ensuring they receive the necessary support to live safely and independently in a community setting.

While we receive daily rates for the individuals we serve, providers often go beyond these reimbursements to meet critical needs. For example, one of our clients requires essential medical supplies such as alcohol wipes and over-the-counter medications for blood sugar management—items not covered by their insurance. Recognizing the importance of these supplies, we ensure they have access to them, even when funding does not account for such expenses.

Additionally, we have supported clients with high behavioral needs requiring increased staffing. In one case, we had to implement two-person staffing due to the severity of the client's behaviors. This resulted in staff turnover and increased wage negotiations, as

employees faced the challenges of managing complex care situations. There are also times when a client's health declines, necessitating additional staffing to ensure their safety and well-being.

In January and early February, we had two clients in the home; however, our reimbursement was reduced because they were considered to be "sharing meals and staff." In reality, each individual has unique cultural backgrounds, dietary needs, and medical restrictions, making meal planning and preparation more complex than what the funding model assumes. Moreover, this approach does not fully consider the increased staffing needs when clients require additional support due to declining health. The current funding structure does not adequately reflect these realities.

To ensure we provide the highest quality care, we collaborate with organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association, the Brain Injury Association, and CQL accreditation programs. These partnerships allow us to provide specialized staff training and uphold policies that enhance client safety and well-being. We compensate staff for attending these essential trainings, and the state has helped support our efforts through funding for CQL accreditation an investment that strengthens care standards.

As the demand for community-based care continues to grow, it is vital to ensure adult foster care homes receive the support they need. Many individuals under 50 do not want to live in nursing homes yet still require structured care in a residential setting. Adult foster care homes bridge this gap, offering a more personalized and community-oriented approach to long-term care.

To ensure the continued delivery of high-quality care, I respectfully urge consideration for funding grants to support adult foster care providers. One critical area of need is accessible transportation, which plays a vital role in enabling clients to engage with their communities and attend essential appointments. Currently, we rely on personal vehicles and must coordinate with external transportation providers, which can be inconsistent and limiting. Securing an accessible vehicle of our own would allow us to expand our services, provide more reliable transportation, and ensure that all clients, regardless of mobility challenges, have equitable access to the care and community connections they deserve.

Investing in these services means investing in the well-being of North Dakota's most vulnerable populations. By supporting adult foster care providers, we can continue to offer high-quality, community-based care that promotes independence, dignity, and a better quality of life for those we serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate the opportunity to share our experiences and advocate for the continued support of these essential services. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Giselle Ishimwe

CEO, A Place To Call Home LLC

Testimonials from families we have had the privilege to serve:



Marta Fuentealba

8 reviews · 6 photos



3 weeks ago

New

I think it is the most caring place oriented to provide the best care A+. and the staff is amazing, they really do whatever is in their hands to make patients in their home. I am totally agreed with the name A place call home.

Personally they own my gratitude forever.

I had my father there and until I couldn't keep him any more at home He was 24 /7 in the best care the place is wisely created big rooms and modern decorations clean and friendly. I appreciated also the kindness to give reports about your love one with pictures and text messages. Again like I verbally congratulate the owner of the place I think this is the future of care and a great alternative wisely elaborated. Thank you all you!!!



Ann Marie Sims

1 review



2 months ago

A Place to Call Home took care of my son. They were very professional and caring. They went far beyond my expectations during his stay there. They were excellent with communicating with me concerning my son's needs. I would highly recommend them for anyone looking for professional care in a home setting!



Diane Ista

1 review



4 months ago

Giselle is wonderful as is her staff! We are an older couple who struggle to get things done but they step in and help us. They take blood pressure, give medications, give sponge baths etc. Our life changed for the better when we hired them. They are amazing.
Diane ista