

Testimony
Interim Human Services Committee – Department of Human Services
Representative Alon Wieland, Chairman
August 2, 2011

Chairman Wieland and members of the Interim Human Services Committee, I am Nancy Nikolas-Maier, Program Administrator for Home and Community-Based Services with the Medical Services Division, for the Department of Human Services. I appear before you to provide information on qualified service providers.

The term qualified service provider (QSPs) means a county, agency or independent contractor that agrees to meet standards for service and operations established by the Department of Human Services. QSPs provide care to recipients receiving services from one or more of the following funding sources: Service Payments to the Elderly & Disabled (SPED), Expanded Service Payments to the Elderly and Disabled (EX-SPED), Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver, Technology Dependent Medicaid Waiver and Medicaid State Plan-Personal Care. QSPs are often the friends, neighbors and family members of HCBS recipients who want to help individuals continue to live in their own homes and communities. However, any agency or individual age 18 and older, who meets the standards, can become a QSP.

Qualified service providers do not need to have a special certificate or license, but they do need to prove they have the skills to provide care. Some services require the QSP's competency level to be verified by a health care provider. Upon enrollment, the potential QSP is responsible to obtain this verification from a health care provider of their choice. In

addition, Lake Region State College has nurses available to help train and verify that a potential QSP has the skill to provide a service.

The Department of Human Services enrolls two types of QSPs; individuals and agencies. Enrolled QSPs can choose to have their name added to a public list of QSPs, which is given to clients by county HCBS case managers. HCBS recipients use this list to choose an individual or agency QSP.

Once chosen, the QSP is given an authorization to provide service by the HCBS county case manager. The authorization provides the amount and type of care they are approved to provide to the client. Qualified service providers are required to keep documentation of the services they provide, and QSPs cannot provide or bill the Department for services until they have an authorization. Qualified service providers bill the Department directly for services provided. The Department may request records for review and audit.

Individual qualified service providers are not employees of the Department. They are self-employed, independent contractors who provide services and are paid for the authorized services they provided for clients. The Department does not withhold or pay any social security, federal or state income tax, unemployment insurance, or workers' compensation insurance premiums from the payments to QSPs. Withholding and paying taxes on QSP payments are the responsibility of the self-employed individual.

A Qualified Service Provider can provide the following services:

Some services are provided by individual qualified service providers and other services are provided by agencies with specialized roles.

- **Adult Day Care:** Minimum of three hours per day of supervised care in a group setting
- **Adult Family Foster Care:** A safe, supervised family living setting in a state licensed home
- **Adult Residential Service:** Care in a residence that focuses on people with memory loss and/or brain injury
- **Case Management:** Process that assesses a client's needs, explores service options, decides if a client qualifies for HCBS services, and provides a link between community resources and qualified service providers
- **Chore Service:** Snow removal and heavy cleaning
- **Emergency Response System:** Telephone emergency response (Lifeline)
- **Environmental Modification:** Remodels select areas of a home to help people live more independently
- **Extended Personal Care / Nurse Education:** Education given by a nurse to an enrolled qualified service provider who provides medical care specific to a client's needs
- **Family Personal Care:** Pays a spouse for providing special personal care
- **Family Home Care:** Pays a relative for providing personal care
- **Home Delivered Meals:** Healthy meals delivered to a person's home

- **Homemaker Service:** House cleaning, laundry and/or cooking meals
- **Non-Medical Transportation:** Provides a ride, and if needed, goes with a person to the post office, bank or grocery store
- **Personal Care:** Help with bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, eating, mobility, incontinence care and in some cases help with laundry, housework and shopping
- **Respite Care:** Short-term relief to full-time caregivers
- **Specialized Equipment:** Equipment to help people live more independently
- **Supported Employment:** Support and training to help people maintain a job
- **Transitional Living Service:** Teaches people skills to help them live independently in their home

Currently there are 1,516 individual QSPs and 141 agency QSPs. Qualified service provider rates vary by the type of service being provided. The individual QSP rate is \$4.28 per 15 minute unit, and the agency rate is \$5.97 per 15 minute unit, for the most common services such as personal care, respite care, and homemaker.

A searchable database of QSPs is available on the Department's website at <https://secure.apps.nd.gov/dhs/qsp/qspsearch.aspx>. This website allows consumers to search for QSPs by county, city or service.

Because recruitment and retention of QSPs is essential in offering an array of home and community-based services, the Department contracted with the University of Minnesota to develop a video called a *Realistic Job*

Preview. The video was created to educate individuals who may be interested in pursuing enrollment as a QSP. If interested, the Department can show a portion of this video at a future meeting.

The Department looks forward to providing information and participating in this committee's study of qualified service providers.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.