

My name is Gloria Fornes. I and my husband own "Home Sweet Home" Eldercare in Horace, ND. We are licensed to care for 4 elderly adults in a family home environment when they can no longer live alone, and before they need the skilled care of a nursing home. I provide care 24/7.

I provide: bathing, dressing, showering, exercising, toileting, hair care, feeding, communications, nail care, teeth and mouth care, laundry, housekeeping, medication assistance, 3 meals a day and several snacks, outings and entertainment. This is with all the comforts and companionship of a family home.

Our concerns are:

We feel we are receiving unfair funding from the State of North Dakota when we accept "Public Pay" clients. (Public pay clients are those who receive taxpayer-funded assistance.)

I have had several clients come to our home from nursing homes where they were paying between \$6500 and \$8000 per month out of their own pockets. When their money was depleted and the state had to take over (now using taxpayers dollars) the most I can be paid is \$72 per day or \$2100 per month. On one occasion I was offered \$15 per day (or \$450 per month) to take a man that wasn't happy in the nursing home he was in. I would have thought the assessment would have been the same, but Home Sweet Home was only worth \$15 a day. I did take \$35 for one and \$42 for another (approximately \$1200 per month for 24/7 care) This compensation is very low considering the great deal of time I spend caring for them. Since we cannot afford to work for 50 cents to \$1 an hour, we cannot afford to take them into our homes. (THIS IS UNFAIR TO THE CLIENTS AND TAXPAYERS ALIKE, WHOSE CHOICES ARE LIMITED BY THE CURRENT FORUMLA)

When I take time off, we are REQUIRED to employ a QSP (Qualified Service Provider) at \$17.12 per hour. After 2-3 hours, the QSP has made more that day than I do. We get the same raises the QSP's gets; however they get 3% of an hourly rate and I get 3% of a Daily rate. Quite a difference!!! AS THE BUSINESS OWNER AND HOME OWNER, WE HAVE A MORTGAGE PAYMENT, LIABILITY INSURANCE, HEAT, LIGHTS, MAINANCE, PROPERTY TAXES (UNLIKE THE NON-PROFIT NURSING HOMES) AND ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR CLIENT.

I have a great passion for my business and I do a very good job. I was told by Cass County Social Services Director, Chip Ammerman, that a solution to my problem would be to **ONLY TAKE PRIVATE PAY CLIENTS**. I feel that is a band-aid solution and our elderly parents, families and loved ones deserve better choices than that.

I feel that if Adult Family Foster Care Homes were recognized by the state of North Dakota like they are in other states, we would have a real Niche or Marketing Opportunity than can:

- 1) Provide elderly people with the choice of a family home environment rather than ONLY the nursing home or institutions.
- 2) If our Adult Family Foster Care Homes could get a reasonable compensation, we would encourage more small businesses in communities all across our state.
- 3) We would employ more QSP's who are always looking for work, which would be creating more jobs with a better income. (\$17.12 per hour) in comparison to the nursing homes that are paying CNA's \$8 per hour.

AFFC Homes represent **CHOICE** for individuals and their families who aren't being given the dignity of that choice now. We represent **AFFORDABILITY** which is a big issue in most families. We represent **OPPORTUNITY** for other home based businesses that create good paying jobs.

There are 54 AFFC Homes in North Dakota compared to over 200 in Minnesota, one of several states that truly recognizes the need and the value of home and community-based care options like "Home Sweet Home" offers.

Example: I have 1 public pay client at this time. 3 ½ years ago her nursing homes costs were \$6500 per month. She then ran out of money and her family fought to move her to us so she could be closer to them. The county paid us \$1500 per month. **THAT WAS A SAVINGS OF \$5000 PER MONTH AND WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING FOR HER THAT THE NURSING HOME WAS DOING.** After 3 ½ years I am now getting \$2100 per month which is the maximum they will pay.

EXAMPLE; Lets take the **Maximum** I can get and the **Least** the nursing homes are getting and put some figures together.

North Dakota State is now paying me **\$2100/month**
(instead of the nursing home costs of \$6500 and up)

The savings to the North Dakota Taxpayer is **\$4400/month**
Or \$52,800 /year

Potential savings w/ 4 possible clients in my home=**17,600/month.**
Or \$211,200 / year.

Potential savings X 54 AFFC in the state of ND **\$950,400/month**
Or \$11,404,800.00 Saved in 1 year.

We believe recognizing and promoting Eldercare homes as a 1st choice would be a win-win situation. We want to afford to accept public pay clients as well as private pay. This is an example of entrepreneurship and job creation that so much of the economic discussion in North Dakota and America is all about!!! *Private pay clients HARD EARNED money would last much longer keeping them from applying to the state for taxpayers assistance for more expensive, and sometimes unnecessary nursing home care.*

IN SUMMARY

- 1) We would like to see the base pay to an AFFC home increased.
- 2) We would like to be recognized and promoted by our county Social Services offices as a FIRST CHOICE, when our loved ones can no longer live alone. In other states AFFC homes ARE the first choice.
- 3) We would like the monthly rate worksheet re-evaluated making it fair to AFFC Homes.

We are asking you to please take a CLOSER look at this scenario in a positive, realistic way. We would like very much to work with a task force to make some changes to the existing plans.

Thank You.

Sincerely,

Don and Gloria Fornes

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