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Assembly Discussion Highlights Need for CNA Pay Act

MADISON – Today, the State Assembly passed Assembly Bill (AB) 76, which would reduce the number of hours of training a CNA is required to complete. Representative Lisa Subeck (D-Madison) introduced an amendment supported by all Democrats to increase reimbursement rates and raise wages for personal care workers as proposed in Governor Evers’s 2019-21 state budget. The amendment failed with all Democrats voting in support.

“Wisconsin faces a significant and growing shortage in personal care workers, while the need for their services continues to grow as our state’s population ages. To recruit and retain more direct care workers, we must pay those who care for our most vulnerable family members and neighbors a living wage and treat them as respected professionals,” said Rep. Subeck.

Rep. Subeck and colleagues have also introduced the CNA Pay Act, which would increase wages and expand access to training for nursing aides and personal caregivers working on the frontlines of long-term care and nursing facilities. The first bill, LRB-0981, would increase the Medicaid reimbursement rate for personal care services, tying the increased reimbursement directly to an increase in caregiver wages. LRB-2460 creates a tax credit for tuition expenses to help cover the cost of CNA training. LRB-0960 would provide grants to technical colleges to expand access to training in underserved areas.

“Like the amendment proposed today, the CNA Pay Act addresses the root causes of the issues facing our direct care workforce by accepting federal Medicaid expansion funds to increase reimbursement rates for long-term care to raise wages and make training more accessible and affordable. Wisconsin can no longer ignore this growing crisis. Our state should take immediate action to raise caregiver wages,” said Rep. Subeck.

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