

Minutes: Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board

Date: Thursday, June 11, 2026

Minutes prepared by: Linnea Pignatello

Location: Hybrid – Minnesota Room at the Department of Labor and Industry and via Webex

Attendance

Members Present

Jason Anderson (remotely)

Commissioner Nicole Blissenbach

Kim Brenne

Jamie Gulley

Maria King (remotely)

Paula Rocheleau

Mary Swanson (remotely)

Visitors present

Todd Bergstrom

Jeff Bostic

Dylan Young

Jerome Balsimo

DLI staff members present

Paul Enger

Ken McGurran

Linnea Pignatello

Leah Solo

Agenda items

1. **Call to order** – The meeting was called to order by Jamie Gulley at 11:03 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared.
2. **Approval of agenda** – A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Paula Rocheleau and seconded by Mary Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
3. **Approval of drafted meeting minutes** – A motion to approve the May 14, 2026, drafted meeting minutes as presented was made by Paula Rocheleau and seconded by Mary Swanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.
4. **Board updates** –
 - The Board recognized outgoing inaugural board member, Maria King, as she retires from state service. The Board members in attendance thanked her individually.

- Executive Director Solo reported she requested updates from Certified Worker Organizations (CWOs) about their progress with the “Know Your Rights” trainings. Solo received a full memo from Minnesota AFL-CIO and their non-profit training arm, Minnesota Training Partnership (MTP). Solo heard from SEIU HC MN-IA that they had staff transitions and no new updates while AFSCME 65 reported they had one additional training in International Falls. AFSCME 65 noted they are hearing reluctance from facilities and are expecting a rush of scheduled trainings before the deadline. Jerome Balsimo was invited to speak to the Board about their efforts to schedule Know Your Rights training. Balsimo is the director of MTP and reported that they have reached out over 2,500 times to facilities and they are receiving pushback from administrators. Some barriers are high turnover among administrators, non-responsiveness, facilities wanting to wait until “next summer/spring”, and administrators unaware of training requirements. MTP has trained 143 workers so far through five trainings. Reportedly, some scheduled trainings occurred with zero staff present because administrators failed to notify employees. Rocheleau asked how the administrators are supposed to get all of their staff trained if they don’t have everyone in at one time. Balsimo stated that a call with the administrator would be the time to work through all the logistics and that he would like help from the Board to connect them with the facilities and associations. He also stated that MTP can provide training in multiple languages, train workers virtually or onsite statewide, and can host the trainings at any time of day. Finally, Balsimo noted that MTP had begun shifting to conducting more walk-in visits and had completed 19 so far.
- The Board then reviewed a memo from the Long-Term Care Imperative (LTCI) raising concerns about CWOs such as providers feeling “forced” into scheduling trainings, administrators wanting to delay until after minimum wage standards are finalized, and questions about rural access and language access. The LTCI also stressed the importance of Board involvement in outreach to provider association. Gulley suggested Rocheleau, Swanson, and Anderson could facilitate their respective nursing homes serving as pilot facilities for these trainings and bring back feedback to the Board. Rocheleau said she has heard some union representatives say they want to train their members. Blissenbach responded that if there are organizations that want to train their members and are not currently certified, the Board can encourage them to apply to be a CWO. At the rate of 5 trainings in the past 6 months, MTP will not be able to train all of the workers in the state. Jerome again asked to be put in contact with associations for nursing homes. Gulley asked for a reminder to be included in every Gov Delivery moving forward. Solo asked for complaints to be brought to the Board, either in direct conversation with herself or to the Board’s email address. Some members asked if the Board could roll out surveys for workers to take after the trainings; members concluded that those surveys could be allowed but would be difficult logistically.
- Solo reviewed legislative updates including a new nursing facility wage supplement that was passed in Session law 121, Article 1, Section 7 and provides for \$400 and \$200 payments for workers, where such payments will be administrated by the Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS has not yet received implementation funds, applications will require both facility and worker submissions, and payments will be issued “as soon as practical,” not on first-come, first-served basis.
- Solo updated the Board on the State Plan Amendment (SPA) response which has been submitted, and Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS) is expected to respond by August 12. Given the lack of recent developments to report, the Board determined it would issued any further communication regarding the SPA at this time.
- New structure and schedule for workgroups-
 - i. Certification/Public Engagement (11 a.m.)

1. Paula Rocheleau
 2. Nicole Blissenbach
 3. Michelle Armstrong OR Michele Fredrickson (TBD)
- ii. Data/Waiver (1 p.m.)
1. Kim Brenne
 2. Jason Anderson
 3. Jamie Gulley
- iii. Alternates
1. Sarah Grebenc
 2. Mary Swanson
 3. Michele Fredrickson OR Michelle Armstrong (TBD)
- Schedule: Two Mondays before the full Board meeting
 - Public Comment- a member of the public requested to speak but cancelled prior to the meeting. The Board noted they can submit written comments or attend future meetings.
 - Solo reviewed the memo on standards review. The Board must review standards every two years and those steps include data analysis, public engagement, and Board deliberations. If new standards are proposed, DHS must provide a fiscal analysis. Appropriations may be required and must align with the Governor's budget cycle.
 - Paul Enger, Office of General Council (OGC) introduced himself, Ken McGurran, and Krystle Conley and reminded the Board that the rulemaking process begins once the Board makes and votes on a resolution. Conley presented on expedited rulemaking. Steps from drafting through governor's veto period were outlined. The expected timeline for a new set of rules is 3 ½ – 4 months at a minimum. OGC reminded the Board that there would need to be a Board resolution outlining rule concepts before drafting begins but that there are multiple reviews of draft language, which can make precise estimation of the timeline for adoption difficult.
 - Discussion about the next set of rules began. Gulley suggested: minimum wage standards for registered nurses (RNs), the possibility of eliminating the holiday exchange option, and retirement plan/benefit standards. Regarding the retirement standard, there was discussion around worker priorities vs. employer recruitment strategies, the operational complexity and auditing feasibility, whether employer contribution percentage could be standardized, and challenges with differing plan types including PERA for public facilities. Rocheleau asked if the holiday exchange concerns were worker-driven or employer-driven. Kim Brenne suggested a flat amount that employers must spend per employee, and the employer has a list of ways they can spend that money. After extensive discussion, it was concluded that the Board would like to survey workers and employers again to reassess priorities given workforce changes, gather data for possible retirement plan standards and RN wage floors, and collect opinions on holiday pay models.
- 5. New business –**
- 6. Next meeting –**

Adjournment

No motion was made to adjourn the meeting because the Board lost quorum at 1:03 p.m. The meeting ended immediately.