

April 16, 2025

Members of the Health and Human Services Committee, My name is Maureen Conley, and I am writing today to formally request the reconsideration or further modification of Chapter 129: Personal Care Agency Licensing Rule, as directed by legislative resolve. While I understand and respect the intent to improve service delivery, workforce flexibility, and client protections, several of the recent changes pose significant concerns that may negatively impact both service providers and clients receiving personal care services across the state.

In April 2024, my elderly mother experienced a traumatic injury, which resulted in major surgery and several weeks in a skilled nursing facility for rehabilitation and physical therapy. Our desire was, of course, to bring her home in the hope that she could resume her normal, active, and independent lifestyle. We quickly realized that was no longer possible. Faced with many overwhelming changes, I had to do extensive research into our options for her care. I decided to look into home health care—something I knew very little about.

I had the absolute fortune of reaching out to a local agency, Loving Touch In-Home Care. I had multiple conversations with the agency owner, Donna Gormley-Greeley, who literally walked me through each and every step of this unfamiliar path. It was then that I began to truly understand what a rare and amazing group of individuals Personal Support Specialists really are.

While I understand and respect the reasons for the legislative changes, the depth and intensity of these changes have me deeply concerned regarding the burden they will place on agencies already operating on very limited budgets and experiencing constant demand for additional services and new clients.

I can only speak from my personal experience in learning how to care for my mother at this stage of her life and watching the amazing Caregiver's from Loving Touch who care for her daily. Their willingness to take the time to get to know my mom—her history, her family, and her beautiful memories—is something I cannot begin to explain. Watching them sit beside her as she shows them photo albums and shares stories of her life; standing next to her at the picture window so she can say good morning to the birds in her side yard; fixing her hair just the way she used to do it herself; the giggles that are inevitable when they decide to give her a manicure and pick out fun, bold colors; endless hours doing word searches; joining her for Bingo in the Community Room; and remembering each evening just how she likes her pillow fluffed before she drifts off to sleep—these are acts of care that go far beyond duty.

I also want to address the issues being discussed regarding supervision frequency. In-Home-Care is a very private and personal experience. I have had to gently coax my mom into learning to trust her caregivers with her personal care. I believe it is an unreasonable expectation that my mom—or anyone else in her situation—should feel they are part of an “evaluation” while receiving a shower or assistance using the toilet. Please stop for a moment and consider how your elderly parent might feel in that situation.

These are not things that can be “regulated” or “instructed.” These caregivers are carefully chosen by someone who understands what this feels like on a personal level. I fully support guidelines to protect our precious elderly family members, but please consider adjustments to this legislation that will offer protection without imposing such strict regulations that these remarkable agencies cannot continue to operate.

Given these concerns, I respectfully urge you to revise the recent amendments to Chapter 129 with input from frontline providers, caregivers, and stakeholders. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding my experiences over the past twelve months and welcome any further discussion. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am confident that with continued conversation and compromise, a middle ground can be reached that benefits our precious elderly population.

Respectfully,

Maureen Conley

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