3/4/21

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Dennis Hazard, I live in Pawtucket. I've been a CNA for 40 years this coming August. That means I started as a CNA in 1981. I've been working on the same unit in the same building that whole time.

Back then, we had 7 or 8 CNAs working on our floor. We also had a bed maker, 2 nurses and 1 med tech. That's 11 or 12 people on our floor. That was for our 38 patients.

Each CNA would have an assignment of around 4 or 5 people. If one of the CNAs called out sick, the management would come up to the floor to take an assignment and help to make sure the patients got the care they need. When you only have 4 or 5 patients, you can comb their hair, do their make up. We would take them outside and sit with them at the picnic table so they could enjoy the outdoors. Every day we would give each patient a whirlpool and a shower. The patients got to live regular lives with dignity.

Back then, there were state regulations about staffing. Then the state stopped regulating staffing in nursing homes. And whatever company owned the nursing home could put however many they wanted on the floor.

Now, on a really good day, each CNA has 8 patients, twice what we used to have. A lot of the time we work short, so we have 10, 11, 12 patients. Three times what we used to have.

That means the patients aren't getting the care they used to get. We never have time to do their hair or makeup. We never have time to take them outside so they can enjoy the outdoors. We have to rush rush rush, to the next patient. If someone puts on their call light because they need to use the bathroom, they'll just have to wait. Patients don't even get a shower every day. There's a schedule, some people get a shower on a Monday, some people on Tuesday.

What kind of life is that? Would you like it if it was your mother or father who couldn't have a shower because it was a Tuesday? Who never got her makeup done? Who never got to sit outside?

This is why we need the Nursing Home Staffing and Quality Care Act. Our residents deserve to go outside in the sunshine, have a shower, have their hair and makeup done. We can do that, but we need your help.

Dennis Hazard, Pawtucket