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**90,000 caregivers and disability/senior organizations  
disappointed by Minnesota legislators**

**St. Paul** – May 19, 2015 – Today thousands of caregivers across the state and a coalition of more than 130 community-based organizations expressed profound disappointment that state legislators this session did not address the serious staffing crisis they face.

“I love my work, but staying with this job has come with many sacrifices,” says Minneapolis caregiver Lynn Jensen who works at a Wingspan group home for people with disabilities. “I lost my home due to rising costs. After paying for rent, insurance and gas I am left with only \$115 a week to spend on groceries and other expenses.”

Funding for community-based services that support people with disabilities and older adults across Minnesota is determined by state reimbursement rates. Supporters of The 5% Campaign argue that state investments in their long-term care workforce are critical to promote independence, meet health and safety needs, and allow people to work in their communities. Their call for an ongoing, rate increase for Home and Community-Based Services went unanswered this session despite \$90 million of proposed funding by the Minnesota House.

“The workforce crisis has already had a significant impact on services for people with disabilities and older adults,” said Jon Nelson, Executive Director of Residential Services, Inc. in Duluth. “I know people with disabilities who had to leave their homes because providers could not recruit and retain caregivers. Existing employees have to work long hours of overtime to fill vacant shifts. It compromises the care when employees are overworked.” The crisis is worsened by the fact that direct care work supporting people with disabilities and older adults in their own homes, assisted living, group homes and the community, is physically and mentally challenging.

Providers, some who have vacancy rates over 20%, are already working with consumers, advocates, and DHS to find additional ways to address the crisis. This includes use of technology and increased use of unpaid supports. But providers say these efforts will only be part of the solution and caregiver compensation is the most immediate concern.

“This is the challenge of our times – to figure out how we are going to care for all of us, including people with disabilities, as we age and need services,” said Bruce Nelson, CEO of the Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota. “Fair pay for caregivers working in community-based settings should be a top budget priority next session.”

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The 5% Campaign is a nonpartisan coalition dedicated to securing an ongoing rate increase for Minnesota's Home & Community-Based Services. Funding will support people with disabilities, older adults and 90,000 caregivers in Minnesota. Visit the [5% webpage](#) to learn more.