



SAMPLE LETTER TO A LEGISLATOR

NOTE: This sample letter is representative of what a direct care professional might write to a legislator. It is important that you write to legislators using your own expressions and ideas. Please do not re-use any part of this letter, but rather use it as a guide in writing your own original letter to a legislator.

Representative/Senator
123 any street
Anytown, KS 66666

Senator/Representative,

I'm sure you are hearing from your constituents on a number of important issues you will be considering during this legislative session. However, I strongly believe that ensuring quality services for Kansans with developmental disabilities is among the very highest priorities that the legislature should consider.

I would like to encourage you to consider "quality-based community expansion". Quality-based community expansion is a balanced, multi-year approach to ensuring that community resources are in place to meet the increasing demands of persons with developmental disabilities in our state. Quality-based community expansion seeks to end the waiting list of persons with DD who wait for services, while also building a quality workforce by bridging the pay gap between State institutional and community direct support professionals. ***I have included a brochure outlining quality-based community expansion as an attachment to this letter.***

I have chosen a profession of direct service to persons with developmental disabilities. Although the job is personally and emotionally rewarding, it is a profession marked by disturbingly high turnover due to the relatively low pay these important positions currently offer.

It is disturbing that my peers come and go so quickly, due to a combination of low pay and high stress. Many are finding jobs with less stress and more money as sales clerks and food service personnel. This kind of turnover is disruptive to the clients we serve, and it shows.

Equally disturbing is that if I were to have chosen to work in one of the State's two DD institutions, I would be compensated by the State at more than \$11.81 per hour – quite a bit more than what I make in the community. The State has professed a philosophy of independence and inclusion for Kansans with developmental disabilities. The compensation we, as a state, give to for those who provide direct support in a community setting that fulfills that philosophy, should be equal to that we, as a state, give to those who provide direct support in an institutional setting.

When assessing your priorities this year, please remember the thousands of us who work to better the lives of Kansans with disabilities, and their families. **I urge your serious consideration of the quality-based community expansion concept that is attached to this letter, and also urge your support of any legislative measure that would seek to implement the tenants of quality-based community expansion. Thousands of Kansans with developmental disabilities will live better lives as a result.**

I would be available to speak to you about this subject at your convenience.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME