



To: Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

From: Shawn Sullivan, President/CEO of Midland Care Connection

Date: February 15, 2022

RE: Support of Senate Bill 453

Thank you for the opportunity to share written testimony in support of Senate Bill 453. Midland Care Connection is a non-profit community care organization whose aim is to improve the quality of life for our aging population and to keep older adults at home and independent. Midland Care Connection provides care and services to more than 1,800 people across 22 counties in Northeast Kansas. The community and home-based services we provide include the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), hospice, home health, meals on wheels, palliative care, adult day health, and grief and loss counseling services.

Midland Care relies heavily on certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and home health aides (HHAs) to provide care to patients and clients in our PACE, hospice and home health programs. We currently employ 95 CNAs and HHAs at Midland Care. Similar to other health care providers, we are facing increased difficulty with recruitment of CNAs and HHAs and have 33 vacancies for aides across our programs.

Our organization is working to become more innovative with our care and service delivery model, improve the culture of our organization and training of our managers as well as offer increased wages and new recruitment and retention packages. None of these improvements will solve the direct care shortage on its own. The same is true for the provisions of Senate Bill 453. However, Senate Bill 453 along with other legislative and policy proposals can help ease the workforce crisis and increase the pipeline of direct care staff entering health care.

Senate Bill 453 helps to ease some of the burdens that prevent schools from the ability to enroll more students into CNA courses. These changes include the following:

- Allowing licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to teach CNA courses under the general supervision of a registered nurse to alleviate RN shortages and expand the number of CNA courses.
- Allow use of simulated laboratories for up to 50% of nurse aide clinical hours in order to expand clinical training options.
- Allow RN's with experience in caring for the elderly or chronically ill of any age to administer the skills demonstration portion of CNA competency evaluations regardless of the clinical setting or their experience.

It is important to note that each health care provider has their own training and education program for new CNAs to ensure they have the competencies and skills to care for our patients and clients. At Midland Care, a CNA orientation is completed by a nurse in our education department and once organizational specific training has occurred and competencies have been demonstrated, the new CNAs will spend more time in orientation within their program.

Many years ago, I took a CNA class and began working as a CNA through high school and college. This experience sparked an interest and passion to serve older adults. It seems that anything we can do through policy to increase the CNA training pipeline, reduce the workforce issues health care providers face and potentially spark the interest and passion of more Kansans to enter a health care career would be a positive thing. Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 453.