**{Date}**

**{Legislator’s Name}**

**{Legislator’s Address}**

**Subject: Address Iowa’s Direct Care Workforce Crisis**

**Dear Senator/Representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: *You can find contact information for your State Senator and Representative, including email and mailing addresses, by going to:*** [***www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find***](http://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find)

I am writing to ask that you support an increase in the Home and Community Based Services, habilitation, and Intermediary Care Facility reimbursement rates. In order to address the ongoing direct care workforce crisis that Iowa community-based providers like Mainstream Living are facing, I ask that you support the Iowa Association of Care Providers requested increase of:

* 10% rate increase
* Designate 75% of the increase as a pass-through to increase direct care workforce wages

Direct Support Professionals provide disability and mental health supports and services to Iowans so that they may live as independently as possible in their communities rather than in an institution. Yet the people who make it possible for our most vulnerable citizens to live a high quality of life are not adequately paid for the important work that they do. The average person providing direct services for the disabled makes roughly $11-12 per hour. Many are working two jobs just to meet their basic needs.

We are at a crisis. Community providers are understaffed. They are turning away people in need of care because they cannot hire enough employees to fulfill the need. As most private sector industries have increased their wages, it has become impossible for community providers to compete. Organizations like Mainstream Living and their staff make it possible for people with disabilities and mental illness to live, work, volunteer, play, and thrive in their community.

An investment in our direct care workforce is an investment for every community in Iowa. Please support increased funding and increased wages for our Direct Support Professionals. They deserve it and they people they care for deserve it.

I look forward hearing whether you will support this additional funding. Thank you for your service.

***Respectfully,***

***Your name and contact information***