

## **Low Wages Hurt the Quality of Home Health Care**

Reader's Note: The following letter from the TGP board was sent to daily newspapers throughout the state of Indiana in November 2015 regarding home care quality, poverty, and wages.

Dear Reader:

With the conclusion of the municipal election season now is an opportune time to look at one of the most pressing issues facing Indiana and its citizens. The issue is low wages and home health care.

Low wages and the lack of benefits clearly put the squeeze on working parents and their families. Breadwinners who earn low wages must deal each day with the consequences of not having the money needed to properly house, clothe, feed, educate and protect family members. Low wages force individuals and families to take shortcuts. Being hungry, poorly dressed, and living in a cold house puts everyone in the household in jeopardy. Living in such conditions increases the likelihood of being sick, of having workplace accidents, or doing poorly in school, of being a victim of crime, and enduring social humiliation.

Living without needed food, clothing, heat and appropriate care is exceptionally risky for children and the elderly. It is especially ironic when home health care workers are poorly paid. More often than not that is the case in Indiana and across too much of the United States.

Poorly paid home care workers that earn less than ten dollars an hour and working without benefits, are often forced to take two to three jobs to make ends meet. By so doing, they place their health in jeopardy and find it extremely difficult to care for their own families.

The lack of living wages and benefits for home care workers places the people they care for at-risk. That is because these conditions trigger the exceptionally high turnover rates among home care workers. High turnover means the persons receiving the care are also placed in jeopardy. Without reliable care people needing home care services are placed in harm's way and even risk death.

For these reasons, The Generations Project will be working with the Indiana Home Care Task Force, SEIU Health Care, senior and disability advocacy groups, public officials and providers to address the critical threats created for persons needing home care when workers receive low pay and few benefits. These issues ultimately affect all Hoosiers and their quality of life. They merit our full attention and action.

Sincerely,

Elmer Blankenship, Greg Server, Ann Latscha, Nancy Griffin and John Cardwell,  
The Generations Project Board of Governors