

CNA Perspectives: In the Workers' Own Words

An important part of the Governor's **Nursing Home Workforce Stabilization Council's** efforts has been to hear directly from nursing home direct care workers about the challenges and rewards of their work. **Nursing Home Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)** provide the majority of the direct care nursing home residents need on a day-to-day basis. CNAs expressed areas of concern to the council including:

1. CNAs worry Child Protective Services workers will be called and investigate them because they can be forced to work double shifts without notice and are unable to arrange childcare.
2. CNAs describe only licensed nurses being provided seated work areas and CNAs have to stand while entering clinical documentation in resident records.
3. CNAs are asked by facility employees to adopt residents for Christmas who would not receive gifts otherwise and pay for the resident gifts without being reimbursed.
4. Night shift CNAs often bring sheets from home to change soiled bedding because they have no access to clean linens and linen closets were likely to be empty.
5. Some CNAs receive NO grief support when residents they loved and cared for died; instead, they were often scolded for being emotionally involved.
6. Facility staff often pay without being reimbursed for resident activity materials and supplies.
7. Staff bring in skin lotion, shampoo, and other products they purchased without reimbursement, especially for African American residents, because the products provided by the nursing home were not suitable for African American residents or residents with special skin care needs.

In addition to this input provided at council meetings, three CNAs agreed to be interviewed on camera, and a compilation of information from these interviews is in this [video](#). Themes that emerged in these interviews are CNAs have devoted years to this work; they often have to work without enough staff at the facility; there is a lack of supplies and adequate equipment and they often contribute items they pay for themselves to help residents; they care deeply about the residents and the work they do; and they see a need for strong leadership to deal with the issues they raised.

The workers themselves say it best. They express the need for:



Higher staffing levels



Better pay



Leadership that cares as deeply as they do about delivering high-quality and compassionate care



Better scheduling and distribution of staff duties



More respect and recognition for their work