**Letter 1**

There’s an often-unspoken crisis underway for providers of service to people with disabilities in Minnesota, and it is about the people who are the lifeblood of any industry‑ employees. Direct support staff or professionals (DSPs) are often underpaid, and that fact impacts our ability to both attract quality workers and to retain them. Other industries can increase sales and raise prices, but ours is dependent on set reimbursement rates from the state government which dictate the payments received for services. The lack of support (or lack of increases) from the state legislature has left us with an estimated 8,700 open positions, statewide. So, we are asking the Minnesota Legislature for a 4 percent increase in these rates to helps us to serve people with disabilities. Please call your state legislators and share your support for the Best Life Alliance’s 4 percent campaign. People with disabilities are counting on you.

**Letter 2**

Most of us see people with disabilities in the community, whether out shopping, at a movie theater, in the doctor’s office or working a job. We might not pay as much attention to the staff members who guide these visits, give job supports and provide the care that’s needed. There is a crisis among these staff members, driven by stagnant wages. Competition for employees, particularly entry level positions, continues to grow, and that impacts disability service providers. Providers are paid set reimbursement rates by the state government. These rates tend to stay flat, or increase at a very slow rate. While that’s happening, nonprofits like ours are losing staff members to other industries and struggling to fill open positions. That means less community involvement, less job support and other negative impacts on people with disabilities. We’re asking people to support the Best Life Alliance campaign to raise these wages. Please contact your legislators and share your support for the group’s 4 percent campaign. Sometimes, more people are needed to take a stand for the people who may not be able to stand up for themselves.

**Letter 3**

A huge crowd filled the Minnesota Capitol Rotunda in recent days to let our legislators know that there is a problem that needs solving this year. It is about people with disabilities and staff members, or direct support professionals, who provide the services they need. We love to see people with disabilities in the community. They’re working, they’re out at parks, they volunteer and more. What we don’t often notice are the staff members who help them. There’s a shortage of these important people, who we refer to as direct support professionals (DSPs). Restaurants and other industries are offering better pay, but ours is stuck, due to limited state funding. This has left an estimated 8,700 DSP positions open across Minnesota. And, an increased turnover rate is even more harmful to us because we rely so heavily on caring people connections. We’re asking everyone to contact their legislators to support the Best Life Alliance Campaign. It calls for a 4 percent wage increase for direct support professionals. It’s a modest increase, but one that we feel is more than justified and, dare I say crucial, to support people with disabilities.