

Eunice – Story of a Home Based Care Consumer, Sidney



My name is Eunice, I'm a member of First Congregational Church in Waterville, and I live in Sidney. I was a school teacher until a car crash left me a quadriplegic and confined to a wheelchair over 20 years ago. Since then, I have had many blessings in my life – wonderful family, friends, and caregivers, the chance to be a deacon at church, a volunteer at the Atwood Elementary School, and a member of the SAD #47 School Board. Still, the fact is that I cannot get through my day without a lot of assistance throughout the day, from getting up, doing light housework, driving to appointments, going me to bed and even using the bathroom.

Through the Home Based Care program administered by Alpha-One, I am eligible for 30 hours of daytime home care a week, and 7 hours of nighttime care. I am responsible for finding, hiring, and training the workers to take care of me. After a co-payment I do qualify for some assistance but cannot offer health insurance or other benefits, which makes it quite a challenge to find and keep qualified, professional caregivers.

After several months of searching, I was lucky to find some highly dedicated women who take wonderful care of me. Still, it breaks my heart to see the challenges they face to stay in this field – working long hours at second jobs and forgoing needed medical care because they can't get insurance. I appreciate their sacrifice, but I know that at any moment they could experience a setback that would require them to look for work with better pay and benefits. This is a constant worry to me, because I know how difficult it would be to replace them.

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To be able to offer my home care workers health insurance would make such a huge difference. The challenge to find and retain good applicants, who provide the best care and make it possible to live at home as opposed to a more expensive nursing home, would be greatly lessened for me and many others.

Mostly, though, it would give me peace of mind to know that the people who go above and beyond to take care of me every day, can also care for themselves now and care will be there when they need it. The school teacher in me knows that is only fair.