

Lilieth Clacken

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Good morning to our Elected leaders, to all visitors present today.

My name is Lilieth Clacken I am a Home Health Aide, employed to two major agencies in NY.

My mission today, on behalf of thousands of Home Health aides is to advocate on their behaves for better pay, compensation for the mammoth tasks we performed along with other Healthcare workers before the Covid 19 Pandemic, during the Pandemic and hopefully long after the Pandemic is gone.

I would like to take a few moments to detail for you my job description, which goes beyond and above these tasks.

The patient in my care presently is a stroke victim, who has been rendered immobile on one side. This unfortunate health challenge has significantly reduced her capacity of taking care of her personal health care, which also diminishes her sense of dignity and independence.

I endeavor to restore some of her dignity by practicing the training given to me by my employers during initial training and on going inservices which enable me to maintain certification in caregiving to a level of professionalism.

I assist her out of bed, I assist her with toileting, bathing and more importantly safety transporting her around her house.

I make her meals, accompany her to her doctor's visit when needed , supervise her taking her medication and simply being beside her to take her to the bathroom whenever she needs to. I am a passionate caregiver who believes in keeping my patient comfortable, clean and as happy as is possible under the circumstances of her not capable anymore of taking care of herself.

My patient cannot be left alone, the importance of me being there is undoubtedly the key to her living a dignified life, her families having that important peace of mind knowing their loved one is in the hands of a capable trained home care worker puts no monetary value.

The companionship I provide is invaluable and so I urge you to provide us Home Care workers with a better salary so that we can in turn take care of our own families in an acceptable responsible way.

During the Pandemic I refused to stay home, knowing my patient needs me and I wanted to be able to provide for my family.

While we appreciate the applause and lip service of thanks, we demand hazard pay from the \$1.6B slated for New York from the American Rescue Plan of 2021.

We worked in our patients homes during this fearful period and so we are expecting compensation.

We demand better pay as we should be able to take care of our own families while providing care for our patients.

And this is the heart of most issues facing home health aides – the work is under valued and under paid and it creates hardship for the aides who stick with the work, and it makes it harder to find new workers.

We have a rapidly aging society and so this should be taken into account as we meet the needs of our most vulnerable seniors who have served this country and should be given the right to stay in the comfort of their homes while we bring professional care to them.

I urge you legislators to secure for us quality personal protective equipment PPE as they were quite inadequate and some of poor quality. This impedes and deny as the necessary protection we need in future Pandemics.

We need the federal BETTER CARE BETTER JOBS ACT passed so our Homecare workers can continue to provide this crucial service and attract younger workers in this field.

Thank you for allowing me to address you all as I anxiously await your response to our cries.