**Minnesota House Health and Human Services Finance Division**

**Testimony of Michael Tripple in Support of**

**21-00299 LTSS Fee and Appropriation Bill**

**December 8, 2020**

Madame Chair and Committee Members, I am Michael Tripple and I have been a public member of the Board of Executives for Long Term Services and Supports (BELTSS) since 2015.

In 2019, the Minnesota Legislature enacted a bill requiring the licensure of directors of assisted living facilities. This was part of a larger bill that required the licensure of assisted living facilities. That legislation was the result of efforts taken by the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, consumer advocates, family members and service providers to improve the quality of care and services provided in these facilities.

In July 2019, BELTSS initiated efforts to establish the licensure program for assisted living directors. I was appointed the chair of the committee charged with the development of the licensure rules. The committee consisted of Board members, state agency representatives, including the Ombudsman for Older Minnesotan, advocacy and provider representatives.

The licensure rules are currently open for formal comment on the website of the Office of Administrative Hearings. The rules establish the minimum standards for licensure, educational and experience requirements, continuing education provisions, and establish standards of practice to evaluate the performance of these individuals. During the development of these rules, the committee took deliberate efforts to ensure that the rules promote quality of care and services yet also provide flexibility to deal with the wide variety of individuals and organizations that provide these critical services.

I very much appreciate your willingness to consider this bill for passage during the special session. The Board has not received any funding to implement the licensure program for assisted living directors.

Approval of the licensure fee structure and the requested appropriation, at this time, is critical. It will allow the Board to develop the necessary infrastructure for the licensure program, to hire staff and to then process applications and issue licenses this fiscal year. Without the appropriation, the Board’s ability to license assistant living directors prior to August 1, 2021, the effective date for facility licensure, would not be possible.

The Board has openly shared our concerns about the inability to implement the program without this funding. We are not aware of any consumer or provider opposition to this request. The use of the State Government Special Revenue funds does not impact the General Fund.

The ability to implement this program will assure the directors meet minimum qualifications and provide services in a manner to protect the health, safety and well being of residents in our assisted living facilities.