

**House Human Services Committee
February 7, 2011
HB 377
Medication Aides**

I, Lori Collins, was a Medication Aide in a long term care facility in Minnesota in 1980. I am now an RN. Medication Aides are a great asset to long term care.

Medication Aides are not replacing the nurse but freeing up the nurse to allow them to take time with residents, families and physicians which in return makes for less errors. Less errors are made by Medication Aides as this is their only focus. The Medication Aide's job is to just pass medications. Medication Aides would not have the distractions that the nurse does, such as phone calls from physicians, taking orders, admissions, discharges and emergencies where the nurse is pulled away.

In rural areas of Montana where it is difficult to recruit new nurses, this would be a great benefit. Due to the nursing shortage, some of these areas are forced to use agency staff which is expensive and does not allow for continuity of care and familiarity.

The Medication Aide program has been set up to provide extensive training and guidelines as to what their scope of practice would be. Nurses do not need to fear that their license will be on the line if an error is made. Medication Aides will be held accountable for their own actions and licensed by the Board of Nursing.

The Medication Aide program may encourage nurse aides to further their education, as I did myself from CNA to Med Aide to nurse.