

Cut to Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Will Harm the Most Vulnerable

The Governor's proposed budget includes a 13.8% cut in reimbursement rates for the Personal Care Assistance program from \$16.15 an hour to \$14.05 an hour.

The Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program is a Medicaid service offered to people with disabilities and seniors who are experiencing some functional impairment and need a Personal Care Assistant to help them with some aspects of daily living such as dressing or bathing.

PCA services allow seniors and people with disabilities to live independently in the community rather than be placed in nursing homes and other institutions.

This service has many safeguards in place, including a required RN assessment and a prior authorization/certification on the number of hours and type of care provided.

PCA services also allow family members who care for these individuals to go to work and have peace of mind that their loved ones are receiving essential services.

The proposal to cut reimbursement rates for Personal Care Assistance (PCA) would significantly impact providers' ability to serve seniors and people with disabilities.

Due to the current low reimbursement rates, there are now too few providers for this service. A further cut in rates will force some existing providers to stop providing this service, thereby limiting even further the people's access to services.

According to a survey performed in the past few weeks, 45% of agencies have indicated they will drop out of the program altogether if the cut goes through. Another 41% have individuuated that they will severely limit the number of cases they can take.

The current rates of \$16.15 an hour do not fully cover the actual costs of providing services including the Personal Care Assistant's salary, benefits, transportation costs to the individual's home, and supervisory and administrative costs.

Approximately 27,000 individuals receive PCA services. Individuals receive on average 15 hours a week of services. The average weekly rate for those services is \$242.25.

The average daily rate in a nursing facility is \$200.51 or \$1403.57 weekly. The average daily rate in a State Developmental Center is \$499.64 or \$3,497.48 weekly.

If less than 200 seniors or people with a disability were placed in a nursing home, due to an inability to find PCA providers, the proposed savings in the Governor's budget would be eliminated.

If only 80 individuals with developmental disabilities were placed in a State Developmental Center due to an inability to find PCA providers, the proposed savings in the Governor's budget would be eliminated.