

We, the undersigned, are members of the direct care workforce and are grateful that CMS has acknowledged our contributions to the delivery of Medicaid services. We wish to express support for the rule and ask CMS to keep the provision that 80 percent of the money Medicaid pays for the work we do in personal / home care goes toward our wages. We also want CMS to strengthen the work of the Interested Parties Advisory Group, ensuring our voice is heard and we have a seat at the table in developing recommendations on rates that affect the wages and working conditions of our industry. The wages we currently earn are not enough to take care of ourselves and our families. Many of us have to take second jobs to survive, live paycheck to paycheck, are unable to take any personal time off, or have savings for rainy days or for retirement. Providing services while under constant stress of making ends meet is neither good for our own health or for the clients we serve. Many of us are also considering having to leave the industry because of the low wages. We urge CMS to do everything in its power to raise our wages and recognize our hard work.

"I have two jobs just to make ends meet. I have been doing this work for over 30 years." Linda Bravo, PA

"I have to work 60 to 70 hrs. a week to make ends meet." Angela Hazelwood, VA

"Working check to check is just draining on me and my family mentally, with trying to decide on what bill to pay first or how to make the groceries last. It's a lot and we ask you to help us and understand our urgent needs." Jacquelyn Arnold, GA

"Yes, I've worked 16 hour shifts multiple days in a row weekly just to be able to afford rent. A higher wage would mean that me & my family would get a chance to catch our breath for once & focus & love on each other more." Alafia Coker, WI.

"Me ha afectado mucho el poco salario recibido. Es difícil con el aumento de las necesidades básicas, poder cubrir mis gastos mensuales . Un mayor salario sería muy de mucha ayuda y bienestar emocional para toda mi familia, estaríamos mejor y más tranquilos. Gracias" Lucia Terrazas, NM

"I am never at home. I pay rent for the house that I don't even spend time in. I can't afford to miss a day of work or my bills won't be paid." Naomi Muyangwa, IL

"Siendo madre soltera he tenido que trabajar 2 trabajos. Pues las agencias no pagan más de 10 dólares." Sonia Bonet, TX

"It's not just the wages. We don't receive any benefits. So we have to work being sick otherwise we don't get paid. The wages won't pay for going to the doctor. What about dental work or eye care. We get nothing but we are supposed to work all the time." Cheryl Johnson, MN

"Low wages mean I rely on government subsidies to pay for my family's health care, education, and soon for my housing. Low wages for home care workers mean more people are institutionalized, diminishing their independence and autonomy and making corporations rich." Hannah Karpilow, CA

"Caregivers are in HIGH demand, unfortunately with inflation and the Medicaid program only paying companies \$15 per hr, they top out their employees at \$10.00, no insurance or benefits. When McDonald's is paying \$17 per hr, Wal-Mart is offering college to employees...WHY become or stay a caregiver??" Darlene Ulibarri, NV

"Homecare workers would be more likely to stay working as caregivers, rather than quitting, if they had higher wages." Lisa Read, OR

"I was a caregiver for twenty years, and while I am grateful for the sense of meaning, integrity, and purpose taking care of another human being can bring, it is labor intensive, often exhausting, and can consume one's time and attention to the point of neglecting self-care. Caregivers deserve a fair wage! Being adequately compensated would remove the pressure of making ends meet and allow the burden of worry and concern to be lifted. The ease of this preoccupation with being able to survive would allow caregivers more focus on the client in need!" Christina Turano, CA

"I was a Home Health Aide for 2 years and I strongly believe the work is necessary and under-appreciated. There are so many people that worry about their loved one whether they be elderly or disabled. A lot of people believe that they only put in as much work as they are paid for, so we need to make sure that in order to get quality care for our loved ones we provide quality wage." Iyesha Alston, GA.

"I am one of the few lucky ones because my husband and family earn more in their professions and have been able to support me. I can't imagine how I would have survived on my own. I hear that the average one-bedroom apartment demands a current wage of about \$26.00 today, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition (retrieved today at nlihc.org). This means that even \$15.00 an hour is no longer enough to ensure that direct care workers are rested and alert enough to be able to in turn ensure that they can keep clients safe while driving them, handling their medications, etc., since direct care workers would have to work close to 80 hours a week continuously to afford their own housing, not to mention their own other basic expenses such as food and health care. Their wages need to be raised accordingly. Workers cannot provide safe care for clients if they are sleep-deprived from having to work multiple jobs to make ends meet." Francine Allen, NJ

"When care workers show up and are diligently assisting other families with our time, love and energy we deserve to be loved on. There isn't any good enough reason that we should show up for everyone else's family and our own families are being neglected. Care workers should be 'Top Tier Paid Workers AKA Essential Workers' just as our responsibilities are!" Renee Osborne, NY.

“If you’re getting a good paycheck, your level of care will go up because you feel like your being appreciated for all your work. This is not an easy job- it comes with a lot of ups and downs. “
Kathy Danielkebir, NH

“The people who care for our most vulnerable family members and who care for our homes deserve living wages. It is hard work that requires love, integrity and care, and deserves adequate pay and access to healthcare and paid leave. It’s unethical to keep workers living in poverty.” Megan Cochran, FL

“I feel like I don’t have the time or means to fully participate in society. I work so much and I struggle to make ends meet for my own family. If I made a higher wage I could be more engaged in my community, able to participate in the economy and more active politically. I feel held hostage by my own financial desperation. Care work is the most human labor, the most important work to be done. It should be valued.” Elodie Rain, CA

Additional Signatories

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