

We the undersigned, have or will rely on the services of direct care workers for ourselves and our families, and want to express our support of the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' proposed rule with regards to provisions on Home and Community Based Services. We believe direct care workers should earn a fair share of the pay, and are concerned by the shortage of workers and high turnover caused by low wages that jeopardizes our access to in-home care. We urge CMS to finalize the rule, including the rule that 80 percent of the money paid for personal and home care services goes towards workers' compensation. This rule will better ensure that all Medicaid beneficiaries can access home and community based services. We also support the establishment of the Interested Parties Advisory Group with voices from beneficiaries and direct care workers, and groups that work on behalf of both of them.

"I am disabled. I depend on my workers totally. They do not receive anywhere near enough to support themselves. Care workers are essential because they care for the elderly and those like me." Norberta Russo, NY

"I rely on an Agency Caregiver to assist me in caring for my elderly spouse; I need to know she is provided with a fair income for her skills." Rondi Saslow, CA

"My late parents were lucky enough to have adequate home care help -- from very dedicated workers. But most of them had to work 60, 70, even 80+ hours each week, typically having full-time jobs with 2 different agencies. Such exhausting schedules are exploitative and dangerous for the workers. And exhausted workers may put their patients at risk. They need a truly living wage that recognizes they do skilled work." Deborah Socolar, NY

"We need consistent, quality care for my father in law with Parkinson's. We need high quality care jobs with good wages and training opportunities." Charlotte Dodge, MD

"My Dad really wants to stay in his apartment, and the only way he can do that is with home care to help him with food preparation and bathing and other activities of daily living that he can no longer do for himself. These caregivers are vital to the survival and wellbeing of our aging population, and they deserve a fair wage for their invaluable services." Nancy Foster, SC

"As the daughter of a parent who had dementia and who was on a fixed income, I saw where the lack of adequate wage compensation impacts the level of care provided. Direct care workers have a very important job caring for other human beings that are vulnerable whether the elderly or children. We expect them to be empathetic to the people they care for, but do not afford them the basic income to live healthy lives. How can they care for others adequately if they cannot afford an adequate level of living for themselves or their loved ones?" Kathleen Vernacchio, MD

"As the parent of a special needs adult daughter, finding quality help is only possible if direct care workers are paid a LIVING WAGE!" Betsy Cousins-Coleman, NJ

"Thanks to home health care workers, my mother was able to remain in her home until eleven days before her death at age almost 97. I am forever grateful for this." Abbie Bernstein, CA

"Increasing the portion of what we all contribute that goes to those providing direct care for our loved ones [and me when need be -- I'm 84] makes one's care giver more secure, relaxed, and consequently kinder and glad to be of service." Peggy Dobbins, GA

"We rely on excellent care workers to care for my 90 year old mom with dementia. Please make care work a job that is fairly compensated and supported." Susan Lob, NY

"I've had caregivers for 20 yrs, and always thought they were underpaid. Still do." Steven Biggio, WA.

"I have four disabled people at home. I have to work full-time because I am the primary breadwinner. We have gone through about five caregivers in a year because they can make higher wages elsewhere and they leave. So I have to train someone all over again. It would be helpful for them to earn higher wages to improve the quality of care and improve access to caregivers for families in need. Everyone needs this care at some point in their lives" Lesli Sherwin, AR

"Higher wages would help provide stability in the relationship between client and caregiver if the caregiver could afford to live decently on the wages paid and thus continue the relationship." Mary Lee Johns, TX

"Caregiving is extremely difficult work which requires care workers to be healthy, alert, and able to critically think. Not only do caregivers need to take care of themselves, but they need to be able to live quality lives to do the important work that they do." Shari Maria Silverman, WA

"In my rural area there are not enough workers who are able to work for the amount that is paid. I can't get the help I need." Tina Ann, CA

"I myself had a sole proprietor house cleaning and household care business for many years . I now need help - after my spouse losing his job, and we both have disabilities and chronic health conditions . After his acute illness and a couple of my injuries on top of it all, I can find no help. Paying direct care workers a living wage would make the services I need from safe and responsible /compassionate workers more accessible to me and my spouse." Ribble, Mary Ann NY

"If workers who give so much of themselves already could be fairly compensated financially, maybe even allowing them to work fewer hours and not be exhausted all the time, not only their living situation could improve and their stress decrease outside of work, but their ability to care and pay attention to their patients/clients would also improve. A win-win proposal" Heidi Haehlen, NC

Additional Signatories

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