

S 139

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053



OR STEVEN A. TOLMAN
SUFFOLK AND MIDDLESEX
DISTRICT
ROOM 213A
TEL. (617) 722-1280
FAX (617) 722-1089
tolman@senate.state.ma.us

- COMMITTEES:
- WAYS AND MEANS (ASSISTANT VICE CHAIRMAN)
 - PUBLIC SERVICE (CHAIRMAN)
 - BANKS AND BANKING
 - ENERGY
 - LOCAL AFFAIRS
 - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
 - STATE ADMINISTRATION

May 13, 2005

Representative Shirley Owens-Hicks, Chair
Joint Committee on Children and Families
State House, Room 167
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairwoman Owens-Hicks,

I would like to request that S. 139, **An Act Establishing a PCA Workforce Council**, for which I am
the lead Senate sponsor, be heard in its amended form at the Children and Families hearing on
Tuesday, May 17, at 10:30 AM in Gardner Auditorium. I am in favor of the changes that have been
suggested and believe these changes will improve the bill.

If you have any questions with regard to this request, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Tolman
Steven A. Tolman



Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill No: S 139

Title: AN ACT RELATIVE TO PCA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

Sponsor: Sen. Steven Tolman

Committee: Children and Families

Hearing Date: 5/17/05

Similar Matters:

Prior History:

Current Law:

Summary: This bill creates a 9-person Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Quality Home Care Council to ensure the quality of long-term, in-home, personal care services by *recruiting, training, and stabilizing the workforce. The members shall be appointed by the Legislature and Governor. The Council may contract with agencies for these services. PCA workers would become employees of the Council. Consumers and their families retain their right to select, train, and fire attendants.*

The Council is to establish a referral directory for routine, respite and emergency care. If the Council identifies problems with services being provided by attendants, it is to notify the relevant agency. A performance review is due every 2 years starting Dec. 1, 2008. The first review is to include findings regarding the appropriateness of the Council's assumption of the responsibility for verifying the hours worked and payment received by personal care attendants.

The bill takes effect immediately.

SUMMARIES ARE PREPARED BY STAFF FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY, AND DO NOT REPRESENT THE OPINIONS OF BILL SPONSORS AND/OR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL AFFAIRS. SUMMARIES DO NOT REFLECT THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION, OR ANY SUBSEQUENT CHANGES OR AMENDMENTS.

Hearing
Summary

Joint
Committee on Children and Families

05/17/2005
- 10:30 AM - Gardner Auditorium

Committee

Members in Attendance:

HOUSE:

Rep.
Shirley Owen-Hicks, House Chair

Rep.
John Lepper

Rep.
Cory Atkins

Rep.
Vinny DeMaceda

Rep.
Thomas Sannicandro

Rep.
Patrick Natale

Rep.
Deborah Blumer

SENATE:

Sen.
Karen Spilka, Senate Chair

Bills
Heard:

Topic:
Disabilities

HB2815

(Parente) Relating to an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to the effects of privatization on the delivery of human services.

SB64

(Barrios) Relating to surveying the needs of children, adults and seniors who are visually impaired and residents of the Commonwealth.

SB76

(Fargo) Relating to an investigation and study by a special commission relative to the needs of persons with agoraphobia and related disorders.

SB79

(Havern) Relating to an investigation and study by a special commission to study the needs of the elderly blind and visually impaired citizens of the Commonwealth.

SB112

(Moore) Relating to a study of long term custodial care options for cognitively intact, physically disabled you and middle aged adults between ages 19 and 59.

SB115

(Morrissey) An act relative to ensuring the availability of family child care services.

SB125

(Rosenberg) Relating to tax exemptions for blind persons.

SB129

(Spilka) Relating to property tax credits for individuals with disabilities.

SB132

(Tisei) Relating to providing supportive living services for brain injured individuals.

SB133

(Tolman) Relating to the mentally retarded and a study.

SB139

(Tolman) Relating to the PCA workforce council.

SB2036

(Menard) Relating to authorizing the Department of Social Services to allow William and Kathryn Worthen of Abington to adopt children beyond the family unit size limit.

Testimony:

SB139

Testified
in support:

- Rep.
Teahan
- Rep.
Tolman
- Celia
A. Wcislo, SEIU local 2020 President
- John
Carbochi
- Jun
Yang



**MICHAEL F. FLAHERTY
PRESIDENT OF THE
BOSTON CITY COUNCIL**

Committee on Children and Families
Room 167
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Friday, May 06, 2005

Dear Sen. Spilka and Rep. Owens-Hicks,

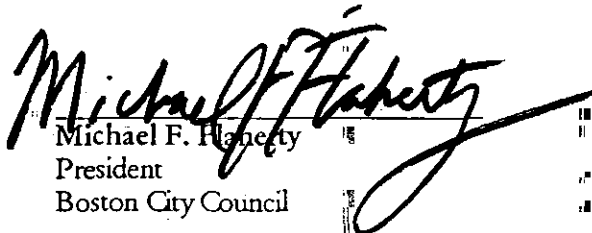
We write you today to make you aware of our support for legislation that would improve the situation between those who require home care and the personal care assistants (PCAs) who provide it. The legislation we are referring to is the PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council Act or Senate Bill 139.

Although it is estimated that several thousand PCAs work in Boston, low wages as well as a lack of health care coverage and other benefits are causing a high rate of turnover. This high turnover rate makes it difficult for consumers to retain PCAs. It is also difficult to find PCAs, which forces both care recipients and providers to take out ads in the paper or find each other through word of mouth.

The PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council Act, however, would address many of these problems. It would create a Quality Workforce Council and statewide directory to make it easier for consumers to find and retain PCAs. It would also improve recruitment and retention of PCAs by providing respite care and backup services, set wages, benefits, and training.

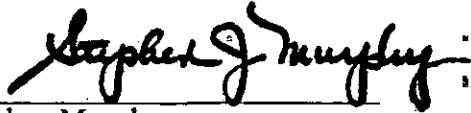
In closing, the elderly, disabled and others deserve to have access to personal care in their homes as opposed to an institution. Not only does this provide a better quality of life for the person, but it also saves money and puts less of a strain on our healthcare system. We urge you to support this important legislation that will improve the quality of home care for seniors and people with disabilities.

Sincerely,

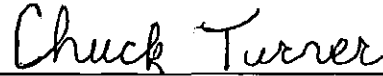

Michael F. Flaherty
President
Boston City Council


Jerry McDermott
Boston City Councillor

BOSTON CITY HALL, ONE CITY HALL SQUARE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, 02201
617-635-4205 FAX: 617-635-4203 Michael.F.Flaherty@cityofboston.gov



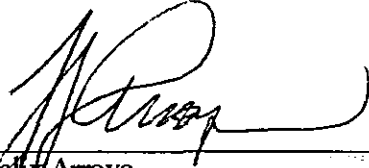
Stephen Murphy
Boston City Councillor



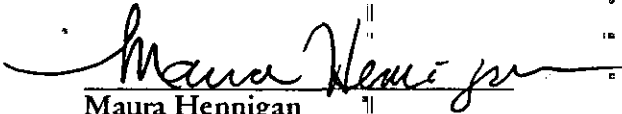
Chuck Turner
Boston City Councillor



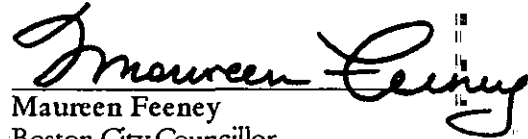
Michael Ross
Boston City Councillor



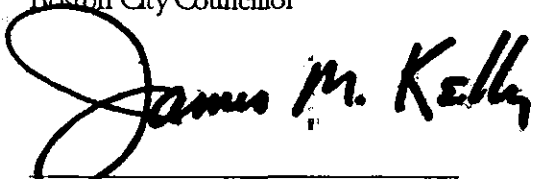
Felix Arroyo
Boston City Councillor




Maura Hennigan
Boston City Councillor



Maureen Feeney
Boston City Councillor



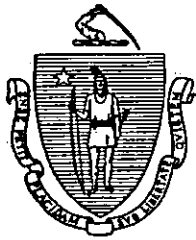
Jim Kelly
Boston City Councillor



John Tobin
Boston City Councillor

Cc: Sen. Pres. Travaglini
Speaker Sal DiMasi
Frank Borges
Chris Sharp

cc: Researcher



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

MAY 23 2005

CHRISTINE E. CANAVAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
STATE HOUSE, ROOM 122
TEL: (617) 722-2006
FAX: (617) 722-2238
Rep.ChristineCanavan@hou.state.ma.us

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP
FLOOR DIVISION LEADER
Special Legislative Committee
on Foster Care

To: The Honorable Karen Spilka, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Children and Families
State House Room 323

The Honorable Shirley Owens-Hicks, House Chair
Joint Committee on Children and Families
State House Room 167

From: Representative Christine E. Canavan, Chair
Second Floor Division

CC

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2005

RE: S. 139, AN ACT RELATIVE TO PCA WORKFORCE COUNCIL

Due to a conflict in my schedule, I was unable to attend this hearing. Please accept this written testimony as a show of support for the above referenced bill.

I believe this initiative will be extremely beneficial to the health and welfare of our elderly and disabled constituents as well as Personal Care Attendants across the Commonwealth. By establishing a PCA Workforce council, consumers will be able to choose a PCA from a statewide directory, get respite care and back-up services. The Council will also help set wages and benefits for these dedicated professionals. In addition, the Council will provide training for PCA's that will help improve recruitment and retention.

The PCA Workforce Council should also require a CORI Check as part of the recruitment policies.

It is my sincere hope the Committee duly notes all testimony and gives a favorable recommendation to S. 139, AN ACT RELATIVE TO PCA WORKFORCE COUNCIL.

I appreciate your time and thank you in advance for your consideration.

(h)



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

SENATOR THOMAS M. MCGEE
3RD ESSEX AND MIDDLESEX DISTRICT
ROOM 74, STATE HOUSE
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FAX: 617 722-1005

JUN 06 2005

- COMMITTEES:
- CRIMINAL JUSTICE - CHAIR
 - COMMERCE & LABOR - VICE CHAIR
 - GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS
 - HUMAN SERVICES
 - TRANSPORTATION
 - CHILDREN'S CAUCUS - CHAIR

May 31, 2005

The Honorable Karen E. Spilka
Joint Committee on Children and Families
State House Room 213-A
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Shirley Owens-Hicks
Joint Committee on Children and Families
State House Room 167
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairwoman Spilka and Chairwoman Owens-Hicks,

I am writing at this time in strong support of S. 139 An Act Establishing a PCA Workforce Council.

This bill establishes a PCA Workforce Council that would alter the Commonwealth's current system of personal care attendants by creating a workforce directory, providing secondary PCA services and improving PCA wages and benefits.

Personal care attendants have helped our elderly and disabled populations to live independently by providing both physical and emotional forms of support. PCAs assist family members in the proper care of loved ones, encourage independence among our elderly, and boost self-esteem for our disabled. However, low wages and deficient benefits have drastically lowered the number of personal care attendants employed within the Commonwealth.

I respectfully urge that S. 139 be reported favorably from the Committee on Children and Families in order to ensure our elderly and disabled receive quality care and companionship.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. McGee
State Senator
3rd Essex and Middlesex

JUN 09 2005

Lisa

**BEVERLY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
BEVERLY CITY HALL
191 CABOT STREET
BEVERLY, MA 01915**

June 6, 2005

State Representative Shirley Owens-Hicks, Chairperson
Joint Committee on Children & Families
State House, Room 167
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative Owens-Hicks:

I am writing on behalf of our organizations, the Beverly Commission on Disabilities and the Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator, in support of new legislation, the PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council Act, Senate Bill 139.

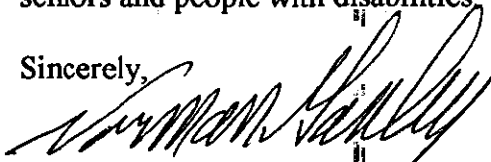
We support this bill because members of our community want to be able to receive personal care in their homes instead of a nursing home or any other institution. To keep seniors and people with disabilities living at home for as long as possible requires a stable, professional workforce of personal care attendants (PCAs).

Low wages and lack of health care coverage and other benefits have led to high turnover of PCAs. It's difficult for consumers to keep PCAs that they can count on. It's also difficult to find PCAs, as those who prefer to direct their own care now have to take out ads in the newspapers or find PCAs through word of mouth.

This legislation creates a Quality Workforce Council that makes it easier for consumers to find and keep PCAs. Consumers will be able to choose a PCA from a statewide directory, get respite care and backup services, and set wages, benefits, and training for PCAs to improve recruitment and retention.

We urge you to support this important legislation that will improve the quality of home care for seniors and people with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Norman Ganley, Co-Chairperson
Beverly Commission on Disabilities



Arthur Daignault
ADA Coordinator

Enclosure (1)

CC: File

JUN 09 2005



Office of the City Clerk
191 Cabot Street
Beverly, Massachusetts, 01915
978-921-6000

Frances A. Macdonald, CMC
City Clerk

Kathleen P. Connolly
Assistant City Clerk

June 2, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

On May 16, 2005, the City Council of the City of Beverly passed the enclosed resolution.

If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 978 921-6037.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Frances A. Macdonald".

Frances A. Macdonald, CMC
City Clerk

**Beverly City Council Resolution in Support of
PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Act, Senate Bill #139**

Whereas: Thousands of Massachusetts seniors and people with disabilities live independently in their own homes, Which they prefer and is less costly than institutional services, with the assistance of personal care attendants, paid by the State of Massachusetts;

Whereas: The community of people with disabilities, which comprises approximately 17.1% of the population of Beverly, is highly reliant on quality home care work to maintain their independence and quality of life;

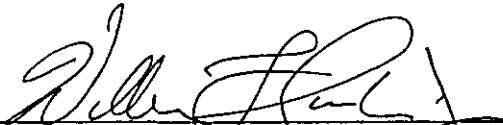
Whereas: The need for in-home care continues to grow exponentially as the baby boomer generation matures; Whereas the quality of care provided to people with disabilities and senior citizens is diminished because of a lack of stability in the workforce, which is the result of personal care attendants receiving low wages and few benefits;


Whereas: Recruiting and retaining personal care attendants has been an ongoing problem because the more systematic barriers to employment have not been addressed; Whereas consumer control of services and supports for people with disabilities is a fundamental organizing principle of the independent living movement;

Whereas: The creation of workforce councils gives disability community leaders and consumers seats on the workforce council board;

Whereas: The creation of workforce councils in other states, such as California, Washington, and Oregon, has successfully stabilized the workforce, raised the quality of life of personal care attendants, and been directed by consumers;

Be it resolved that the Beverly City Council endorses the PCA Quality Workforce Council legislation, Senate Bill #139.


William F. Scanlon, Mayor


Paul M. Gioielli, Council President



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053



SENATOR CYNTHIA STONE CREEM

FIRST MIDDLESEX AND NORFOLK
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COMMITTEES:

REVENUE (CHAIR)
PUBLIC HEALTH (VICE-CHAIR)
JUDICIARY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
BONDING, CAPITAL EXPENDITURES
AND STATE ASSETS
TELECOMMUNICATION, UTILITIES
AND ENERGY

June 27, 2005

Senator Karen Spilka, Senate Chair
Joint committee on Children and Families
State House, Room 213-A
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Shirley Owens-Hicks, House Chair
Joint Committee on Children and Families
State House, Room 134
Boston, MA, 02133

Dear Senator Spilka and Representative Owens-Hicks:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill No. 139, "An Act Relative to PCA Workforce Council" and to urge the Joint Committee on Children and Families to favorably report this bill out of committee.

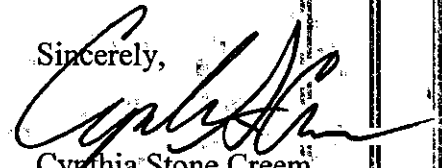
This legislation, which is supported by the Brookline Commission for the Disabled, recognizes the importance of having access to quality and stable personal care in one's own home instead of a more-costly and impersonal institution. Therefore, S.139 provides for the creation of The PCA (personal care assistant) Quality Home Care Workforce Council. This council would have the power and duty to stabilize the workforce and to improve the quality of long-term personal care services in the home.

Currently, low wages and lack of health coverage and other benefits have led to an average turnover rate of 40%-60% for PCAs. With turnover rates this high, it is difficult for consumers to find and keep PCAs they can count on. The creation of the council would address this problem by setting wage, benefit, and training for PCAs, and by creating a statewide directory of trained PCAs, which, in turn, would improve the quality and continuity of personalized in-home care available to consumers. Even more importantly, this council would protect consumer choice in the PCA market.

I believe these are common sense measures which will not only greatly improve the quality of PCA care, but also empower consumers. I would again urge you to give this legislation a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide you with any further information on this matter.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Stone Creem
State Senator

The PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Act

S. 139

S. 139 gives personal care attendants (PCAs) and consumers a way of working together to reduce turnover and build a stable workforce that ensures people with disabilities and seniors can get the care they need to live at home.

Problems Facing Consumers and PCAs

- **Difficult to Find a PCA.** There's no directory of PCAs, so consumers are on their own to find one. When a PCA can't work, there's no system for backup.
- **Difficult to Keep a PCA.** It's hard to keep a PCA who will provide continuous, long term care. Turnover rates are high due to the lack of benefits and low wages.
- **Consumers and PCAs Don't Have a Voice.** Decisions on key issues such as wages and benefits are made solely by the legislature, with no systematic way to involve consumers and PCAs.

Solution: A Quality Workforce Council

S. 139 addresses these issues by creating a Quality Workforce Council, led by a consumer-majority board of directors, which will:

- **Make it easier to find a PCA** through a workforce directory.
- **Provide backup services** when a PCA is unavailable.
- **Reduce turnover** by setting fair wages and benefits for PCAs.
- **Maintain consumer control and direction.**

The Council gives both PCAs and consumers a real voice in the system. It will:

- Give caregivers the opportunity to join together in a union if they choose.
- Give consumers a seat at the table to negotiate with PCAs on workforce issues.

A Successful Model

Similar councils have shown real results in several other states, including California, Washington, Oregon, and Michigan. Turnover has been reduced by 33% in San Francisco County, where this kind of council has been up and running the longest¹.

For more information, contact Becca Gutman at 877-409-2020 x133.

¹ Candace Howes, "The workforce stability of the IHSS Home Care Workers in San Francisco County," Working Paper, University of California Institute for Labor and the Economy and the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Labor Education and Research, November 2002.

Improving the Personal Care Attendant Program Through a PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council

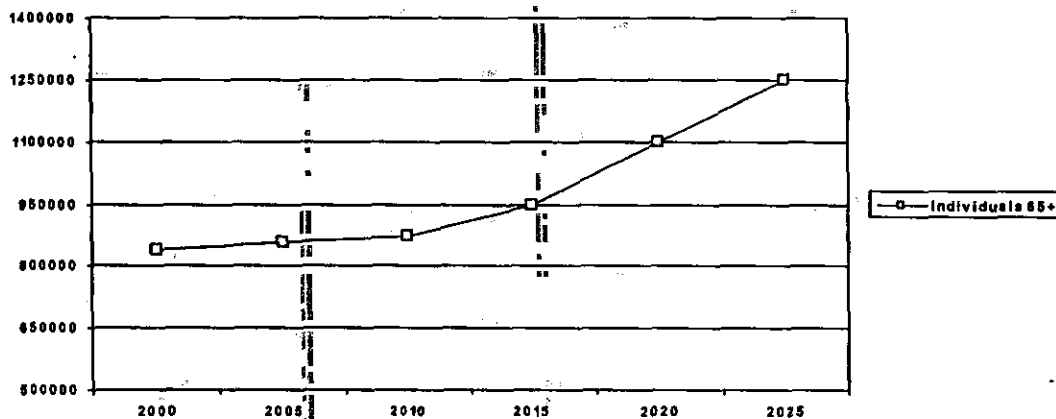
The demand for services that allow the elderly and people with disabilities to stay in their homes as long as possible is projected to rise dramatically in the next decade. Now is the time to improve the workforce structure of the PCA home care system so that it can handle the increased demand and ensure quality home care for seniors and people with disabilities.

Problem: Rising Demand, Impending Workforce Shortage

The shortage in direct care workers is projected to become more severe as the population ages. Massachusetts ranks in the top ten states with the greatest need for direct care workers between 1998 and 2008.¹ Massachusetts is expected to need an additional 15,000 direct care workers over this period.² At the same time, the population of the elderly in Massachusetts will increase by double that amount. In fact, as the elderly population increases in Massachusetts, the supply of potential direct care workers, already stretched to its limits, is expected to decrease.

- Between the years 2000 and 2025 the elderly population in Massachusetts is expected to increase by 48%.
- The potential direct care workforce (women ages 25-44) is expected to decrease by 7% over this same period.³

Chart 1. Projected Rise in the Elderly Population in Massachusetts 2000-2025



Problem: High Workforce Turnover

One of the problems faced by consumers of home care services is the high turnover of qualified workers, due to a lack of benefits, training, and a livable wage. To have quality care for seniors and people with disabilities, consumers and their caregivers must be able to build relationships and establish continuity of care. With turnover rates in home care averaging 40 to 60 percent, the continuity of care for consumers is jeopardized.⁴

¹Harmuth, Susan. "Forum: The Direct Care Workforce Crisis in Long Term Care" in the *NC Medical Journal*. March/April 2002.

²Ibid.

³Clearinghouse for the Community Living Exchange Collaborative (www.hcbs.org) Long Term Care Expenditures by State 1998-2003 - Massachusetts.

⁴"Recent Findings on Frontline Long Term Care Workers: A Research Synthesis 1999-2003". Produced by DHHIS: Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation Office of Disability, Aging and Long Term Care Policy. May 2004.

The PCA workers provide hands-on care to elderly and people with disabilities, yet they do not have health insurance for themselves or their families, nor do they receive standard benefits that other health care workers receive, such as sick days or vacations. While PCA workers receive hands-on instruction from the consumer on the consumer's day-to-day care, they do not receive training from the state or from the fiscal intermediaries which provide their paycheck. There is no official employer beyond the consumers they care for to whom they can turn to address economic and administrative employment issues. PCA workers have no voice in the system.

Problem: Difficult for Consumers to Navigate

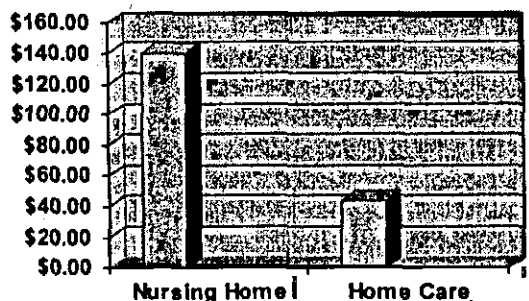
Currently, the consumer in the PCA program is solely responsible for outreach efforts to find a potential worker, coordinate employment, and train the worker. If their worker becomes sick, the consumer is often on their own to find a replacement or respite care worker. The difficulty that consumers face in finding and retaining qualified caregivers cannot be overstated.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts currently offers no coordination of the PCA program that would help match consumers with workers, offer referrals and respite care, oversee employment issues for the workforce, or coordinate recruitment or training for the PCA workforce. There is no statewide Directory of workers. This coordination is urgently needed.

Solution: Invest in a Quality Home Care Workforce

Investing in a quality home care workforce makes sense financially, because home care costs much less than nursing home care. In fact, in many cases, the cost of home care is less than half of the daily Medicaid nursing home rate.

Chart 3. Average Medicaid Expenditure for Home Care Services (\$43.70)⁵ Versus Nursing Home Care (\$140.63)⁶ in Massachusetts



Solution: PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council

To ensure that seniors and people with disabilities will be able to find and keep home caregivers and receive quality home care, Massachusetts should create an independent public Quality Home Care Workforce Council for the PCA program.

The PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council would be charged with: establishment of a statewide worker Directory to coordinate referrals and respite care for consumers; recruitment of workers; provision of training opportunities for workers and consumers; serving as the public employer of PCA workers, setting wages and benefits, and conducting collective bargaining.

⁵ Average of ECOP Cap, Elder Home Care Cap, and Massachusetts Long Term Care Guide:

http://www.mass.gov/doi/Consumer/css_health_LTCGuide1.html

⁶ From the State Medicaid Reimbursement Surveys, DPHS, WSU 1994-2002.

A PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council in Massachusetts would augment, not replace, the current system, while giving caregivers a voice in the system. The best aspects of the current system would not be altered: consumers would retain full rights to hire and fire a worker, and to direct all aspects of their day-to-day care. The intake and assessment system for consumers would not be altered, and the non-profit fiscal intermediaries and subcontracted offices would continue to operate the payroll systems. PCA workers would have an employer to oversee economic and administrative employment issues, including the ability to bargain collectively, and to screen and train workers—without altering consumer direction of care.

The PCA workers would become employees of the PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council, not of the Commonwealth, thus not adding to the Commonwealth's employee rosters, pension plans, or other state employee programs.

In Massachusetts, an independent, public Quality Home Care Workforce Council could be created through legislative action. The Council would cover all consumer-assisted and consumer-directed PCA caregivers for the elderly and people with disabilities. It would be governed by a board of directors that would include consumers, representatives of seniors' and people with disabilities' groups, and others as designated and appointed by the Legislature. The board of directors would report to the Legislature and Department, as instructed, on the implementation of the Council.

Similar councils and authorities have been successfully implemented in a number of other states, including Washington, Oregon, and California, and are currently being created in Michigan and Wisconsin. In each state such independent public councils were supported by public officials for the added coordination, referrals, and training the new structure provided to consumers and caregivers.

Summary of Academic Research Supporting Effectiveness of Councils:

- An analysis by Candace Howes for the University of California Institute for Labor and the Economy and the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Labor Education and Research shows a 30% reduction in turnover of home care aides in San Francisco County resulting from implementation of wage and benefit improvements through the San Francisco Public Authority.⁷
- The California Department of Social Services reported to the state legislature in 2000 that the County Home Care Councils "have been able to track and improve the quality of care to consumers by prioritizing high risk consumers, tracking abuse by caregivers, tracking consumer complaints and resolution, and providing medical and dental benefits for caregivers."⁸
- Workforce Councils and Public Authorities are highly cost-effective and have very low start-up costs. A recent audit for the state of WA's public authority shows the administrative costs for the entire state were approximately \$120,000 for FY04. The costs for a statewide Registry of Workers for FY04 were \$186,000.

⁷ Candace Howes, "The workforce stability of the IHSS Home Care Workers in San Francisco County," Working Paper, University of California Institute for Labor and the Economy and the University of California, Berkeley, Center for Labor Education and Research, November 2002.

⁸ "Implementing Public Authorities and Non Profit Consortia to Deliver In-Home Support Services," Summary of CCDSS Adult Programs Branch Report to the Legislature, July 2001.

How a Quality Workforce Council Would Affect Personal Care Services for Consumers

A PCA Quality Workforce Council will augment, not replace the current system, while making it easier to find and keep personal care assistants.

The best aspects of the current system would not be altered: consumers will retain full rights to hire and fire a worker, and to direct all aspects of their day-to-day care. The intake and assessment system for consumers will not be altered, and the non-profit fiscal intermediaries and subcontracted offices will continue to operate the payroll systems.

Consumer Concerns	Current System	With a Quality Workforce Council
Can consumers direct their own care?	YES	YES
Can consumers hire their own attendants?	YES	YES
Can consumers fire attendants?	YES	YES
Are attendants prohibited from striking?	YES	YES
Are attendants prohibited from picketing?	YES	YES
Is there a statewide workforce directory that helps match available attendants with consumers?	NO	YES
Do consumers have a voice in setting attendants' wages and benefits?	NO	YES
Are backup services and respite care readily available?	NO	YES

For more information,
contact Enid or Becca at (877) 409-2020.

SEIU Local 2020 21 Fellows Street, Roxbury, MA 02219-9909



Testimonials in Support of Quality Workforce Councils

—Frances Gracechild

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
SACRAMENTO'S INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER



There have been significant systemic improvements in the quality of home care services here in California since the creation of the Workforce Councils (or public authorities, the term we use in California). Wage and benefit improvements for attendants have had a stabilizing effect on the quality of the home care program.

Before the formation of the public authority in our county, workers received minimum wage and no health care benefits. This resulted in high turnover, with the average worker leaving within 6 months for a better opportunity to earn "livable wages."

Now here in Sacramento and Yolo counties, our attendants earn \$9.50 per hour and full time workers (20+ hours) are eligible for health care benefits. This has dramatically reduced turnover.

Prior to the entrance of SEIU into our stakeholder coalition, there had been no effective reforms to the In-Home Supportive Services program in over 20 years. Because wages are negotiated county by county, the statewide political presence of a powerful union guarantees respectful access to the local Board of Supervisors in all 56 counties of California.

Having the public authority and the union for the workers hasn't interfered at all with consumer control and direction. Consumers are still able to direct their own care, and hire and fire attendants. We established consumer direction as one of the guiding principles of our statewide Quality Home Care Coalition of attendants, people with disabilities, and senior citizens.

The powerful coalescing of the disability, senior, and labor communities has produced over 140 million new dollars into the state for wages and benefits. The coalition protected the new funds when the incoming Governor Schwarzenegger proposed to cut all state funding for family providers last year. This cut would have devastated over 75,000 of California's poorest families struggling to keep their loved-ones from entering custodial care facilities (nursing homes).

The union has been a loyal partner to us on other issues of concern such as ADA access and related social justice concerns such as affordable, accessible housing and transportation. The union has also participated generously in our annual fundraising campaigns. Basically I feel like I have a powerful ally in the work of our agency. I believe good faith coalition efforts that put to rest old stereotypical prejudices against organized labor is the beginning step in achieving the same improvements we have won in Sacramento and Yolo Counties.

*For more information,
contact Enid or Becca at (877) 409-2020.*



SEIU Local 2020 21 Fellows Street, Roxbury, MA 02219-9909

—Katrinka Gentile

CHAIRWOMAN, ADAPT OF THE GREATER NORTHWEST

I definitely encourage consumers in Massachusetts and other states to create a Quality Workforce Council and to work with SEIU. With the strength and the power of the union and the passion and desire of consumers, it is a win/win situation. The attendants get the improvements they deserve and the consumers gain more control of their lives.

Since we've started our Home Care Quality Authority Board (HCQA) here in Washington a few years ago, we finally have consumers and attendants in the control booth together. With representation on the board from all the different groups using personal care attendants (or independent providers as we call them in Washington), we truly are hearing what the needs of attendants really are.

If we can treat our attendants with the respect that they deserve and offer them the wages and the benefits they deserve, then we are the winners also. I've often said that a happy attendant makes for a smoother day for those of us who use them.

We have worked with the union to improve the attendants' employee package. Their wages have been increased, they also get L&I, and medical insurance if working enough hours in one month.

In 1999 we gained the rights for self directed care. Nothing has changed since we've formed the Quality Authority, except for our attendants being happier because of the changes. We still direct our own care and have the right to hire and fire attendants, and the attendants can't strike or picket.

I have traveled around the state with some of the leaders of SEIU to educate folks on the Quality Authority. Through doing that I learned that SEIU's goal is not just to start a union for the attendants but to better the lives of all working people, seniors and folks with disabilities.



"It's by far the best thing that's happened to home care. We can hire people at good wages, and consumers have full control over their lives."

—Nancy Becker Kennedy
CONSUMER AND BOARD MEMBER OF LOS ANGELES PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR OVER SIX YEARS

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