



PROFILE

Hi, my name is Damon Leivestad, I'm a 50-year-old Mechanical Engineer and Disability Advocate from Plymouth, MN. I was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy which is a degenerative neurological disorder that causes muscle deterioration and weakness as it progresses. I began using a wheelchair full-time when I was ten years old, and I have been using PCA home care services since 1992.

Due to the overall difficulty of finding home care workers I have begun to rely more and more on my parents to provide for my care. This solution, however, is not sustainable as my parents are now in their late 70's and have much less ability to help me than they once did. Many of my cares that are easily done by one home care worker requires both of my parents working together to accomplish. This has left me increasingly concerned about their and my safety as well as what the future has in store for me.

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MODIFIES EXISTING ENHANCED LANGUAGE, ADDS TIERED ENHANCED RATES, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY RATES, AND WEEKEND WAGE DIFFERENTIAL RATES. SF4045 & HF4218

(1) Corrects a loophole in the enhanced rate wording by amending [256B.0659](#), SUBDIVISION 24, that allows agencies to pay less than the 7.5% increase due to workers.

- Since the Enhanced Rate program began, agencies often use this wording as a loophole to claim that the extra enhanced rate money is going to "benefits" so they don't pay the PCA's as much as they should. We need to correct this language, so homecare workers are paid what they are owed.

(2) Creating an Enhanced Rate Tier would help ensure those with complex needs can find adequate care to continue to live and work in their communities. Home care workers who earn an enhanced rate require mandatory training by the state and additional training dependent on the client they work for (Ventilator, Bi-Pap, Cough Assist, Suction Machine, G-Tube, Catheter, Nebulizer, Electric Wheelchair, Hoyer Lift, etc.) and provide more labor-intensive work than those who work with clients with less serve disabilities. An enhanced rate is imperative for clients with 10 or more hours of care per day but the current 7.5% is not enough for clients with even more complex care. There are very few clients (only hundreds) in these upper tiers so the additional costs would be minimal compared to the overall PCA budget.

- an enhanced rate of 107.5 percent of the rate paid must be paid on top of any other enhancements in this subdivision for services provided to people who qualify for 10 to 14.75 hours of support per day; and
- an enhanced rate of 12.5 percent of the rate paid must be paid on top of any other enhancements in this subdivision for services provided to people who qualify for 15 to 19.75 hours of support per day; and
- an enhanced rate of 117.5 percent of the rate paid must be paid on top of any other enhancements in this subdivision for services provided to people who qualify for 20 or more hours of support per day.

(3) The lack of skilled training required for homecare workers is often used as an argument for their low wages. We need to develop a problem that would pay PCA's certified or licensed as a RN, LPN, HHA, or CNA 25 percent more per hour. This would draw more skilled people into the home care field. It would also create an incentive for current PCA's to get additional training. Together, this would provide a pipeline of highly skilled and trained PCA's into the workforce.

- an enhanced rate of 125 percent of the rate paid on top of any other enhancements in this subdivision must be paid for services provided by a support worker certified or licensed as a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, home health aide, or certified nursing assistant.

(4) Currently, it's very difficult to find staff for weekend shifts, which can place clients in potentially dangerous situations that could result in expensive medical complications. Creating a higher weekend rate would help clients fill open shifts and create a safer and more stable environment for their physical and emotional wellbeing.

- an enhanced rate of 110 percent of the rate paid on top of any other enhancement in this subdivision must be paid for services provided from 8 p.m. Friday night to 8 a.m. Monday morning.