

# Personal Care Attendant Program

The MassHealth Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program is a central piece of the Massachusetts long term care system. Operating for over thirty years, the PCA program has been a very popular, effective, and cost-efficient long term care program for many of the state's seniors and consumers with disabilities.

- **Quality Care:** PCAs offer assistance with “activities of daily living” that allow more than **19,000 Massachusetts residents** to live independent lives at home (where the majority of us would prefer to remain throughout our lives). PCAs assist their consumers with a wide range of necessary care including bathing/grooming, dressing, taking medications, eating, and toileting. If needed, PCAs can also assist with special related needs such as laundry, shopping, meal preparation, and transportation to medical providers.
- **Care At Home:** Almost all of us, including seniors and those with a disability, want to stay in our homes for as long as possible. The PCA program provides a popular solution that allows consumers to **manage their own care in their own homes** and community.
- **Less Cost:** Cuts to the PCA program would mean a loss of valuable federal matching dollars and higher long term costs forcing individuals into less desired institution care. Cuts to this **cost-effective long term care** program would result in only limited short term savings.
- **Quality Jobs:** There are nearly 30,000 PCAs in Massachusetts, who have seen their hourly wage increase from \$10.84 to \$12.48 an hour, received limited paid time off benefits for the first time, and are collectively bargaining for additional wage increases, health care, training and other needed benefits. The PCA program infuses over \$300 million in state dollars directly in to Massachusetts communities, which is re-invested in local communities by the low-income PCAs receiving this much-needed income.

## **Properly funded PCA program would:**

- ✓ Save money by allowing people to stay in their homes,
- ✓ Create quality jobs for our communities, and
- ✓ Control overall health care costs with a skilled workforce.

In difficult economic times policymakers must look at new efforts to control rising health care costs, we must work to reform and expand access to a very valuable home care program.