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United for Quality Care

March 3, 2021
Draya Carlone
Family member of Consumer
SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee, my name is Draya Carlone and my mother is a consumer who receives PCA services in Middletown. I'm here today because the Medicaid waiver program needs to be expanded, and PCA's need to be treated like the professionals they are - with respect.

My mother had a stroke years ago and was paralyzed on her right side. She became eligible to receive Medicaid waiver services and we were able to receive in home PCA services. She has been receiving PCA services now for 6 or 7 years. I moved home in 2019 to help with her care, but her condition is getting worse. She can't walk and we are going to need a Hoyer lift or something to move her. Unfortunately, the more care she needs, the less we can get from the State to provide care for her.

We love the fact that we have PCA's that are now friends and that we consider family. We have to work full time so we can't be there all the time. My mother has dementia and sometimes she doesn't remember who they are but the minute they walk in, she remembers. They bring her joy and care. It takes a lot of stress off of us and because of the PCA's we do not have to put her in a nursing home, we can keep her at home with us. Especially in the pandemic, it has been a huge weight off our shoulders.

Unfortunately, PCA's do not get the respect from the state that they deserve. PCA's should earn \$20 an hour and benefits. There is no reason a PCA should have to work more than one job. They should be concentrating on the consumers they have. PCA's need to be able to take care of themselves so they are in good health and a good state of mind to take care of consumers. They should be able to make ends meet and not have to worry about how they are going to pay their living expenses. It stresses them out and stresses the consumer out as we.

Back injuries are so common in this industry. They happen very easily. And when that happens, it's hard to continue to do this work. When I was a vet tech it would happen to me, trying to lift a dog up on a table. It's critical that PCA's get affordable healthcare so when things like back injuries happen, they are cared for and can get themselves back to normal without having to rush.

They should also have retirement. Everyone should have retirement! That's one of those important basic forms of security that people need in their lives. It brings a sense of peace to someone. It alleviates so much stress on them, which allows them to give better care. What are they going to do when they can't work anymore? Please support the PCA's that give care in this program. They are so important to families like mine. Thank you.