

# Health Workforce Policy Brief

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## California's Medicaid Personal Care Assistants: Characteristics and Turnover among Family and Non-Family Caregivers

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### I. Introduction/Background

Personal care assistants (PCAs) provide supports and services that enable older adults and individuals with disabilities to remain in their homes and in community settings. State Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services programs facilitate use of alternatives to institutional care by paying for personal care assistance. This [study](#) characterizes the personal care assistance role played by family members and non-family in California, which has the nation's largest consumer-directed Medicaid personal care assistance programs. We describe factors that affect turnover among PCAs, as turnover is associated with lower quality of care and adverse outcomes for recipients.

### II. Methods

Using state and federal data sources (2006 to 2008) covering first-time recipients of In-Home Supportive Services, the California Medicaid personal care assistance program, we describe demographic and other characteristics of care recipients and PCAs. We also characterize differences in PCA utilization and turnover across racial and ethnic subgroups.

### III. Findings

Family members comprise the majority (63.5%) of the PCA workforce in California's Medicaid program. The overall rate of PCA turnover in the first 12 months of service was 13.6%, and the probability of turnover among family member PCAs was less than half that of non-family PCAs. Among recipients with non-family PCAs, higher payment rates and higher local unemployment rates were associated with a lower likelihood of turnover (Figure 1), but these factors were not salient for family member PCA turnover. Racial and ethnic minorities with non-family PCAs experienced higher rates of turnover (Figure 2).

### IV. Conclusion

The rate of turnover among PCAs in California's Medicaid program is relatively low, and this may be partly due to high rates of family member participation.

### V. Policy Implications

For those with non-family personal care assistants, raising pay may be an important approach to stabilizing the workforce and improving continuity of care. Racial and ethnic minorities who do not have family members to provide

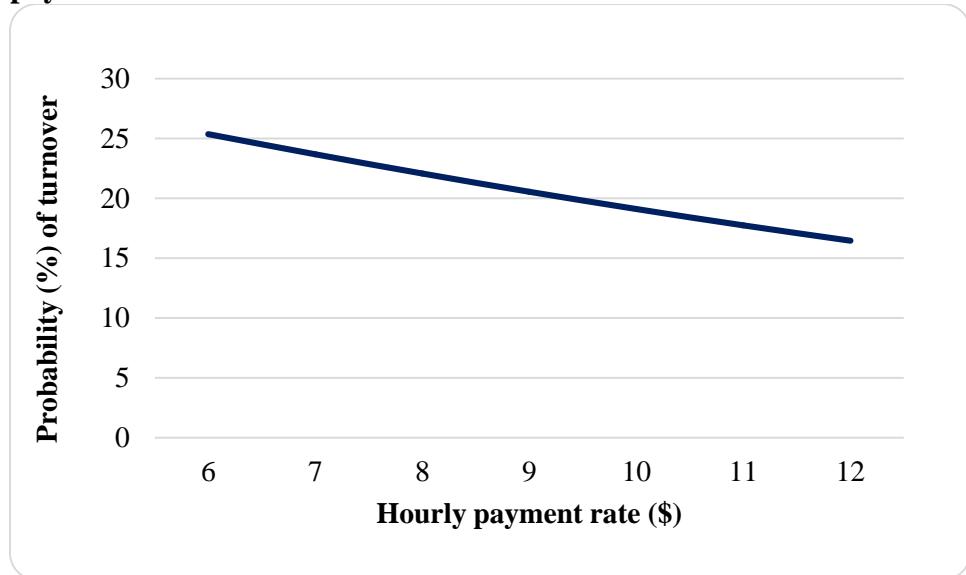
### Conclusions and Policy Implications

- 1) The rate of turnover among personal care assistants (PCAs) in California's Medicaid program is relatively low, and this may be partly due to high rates of family member participation.
- 2) For those with non-family PCAs, raising pay may be an important approach to stabilizing the workforce and improving continuity of care.
- 3) Racial and ethnic minorities who do not have family members to provide personal care assistance may particularly need additional supportive policies to reduce worker turnover.

personal care assistance may have greater need for additional supportive policies to reduce worker turnover.

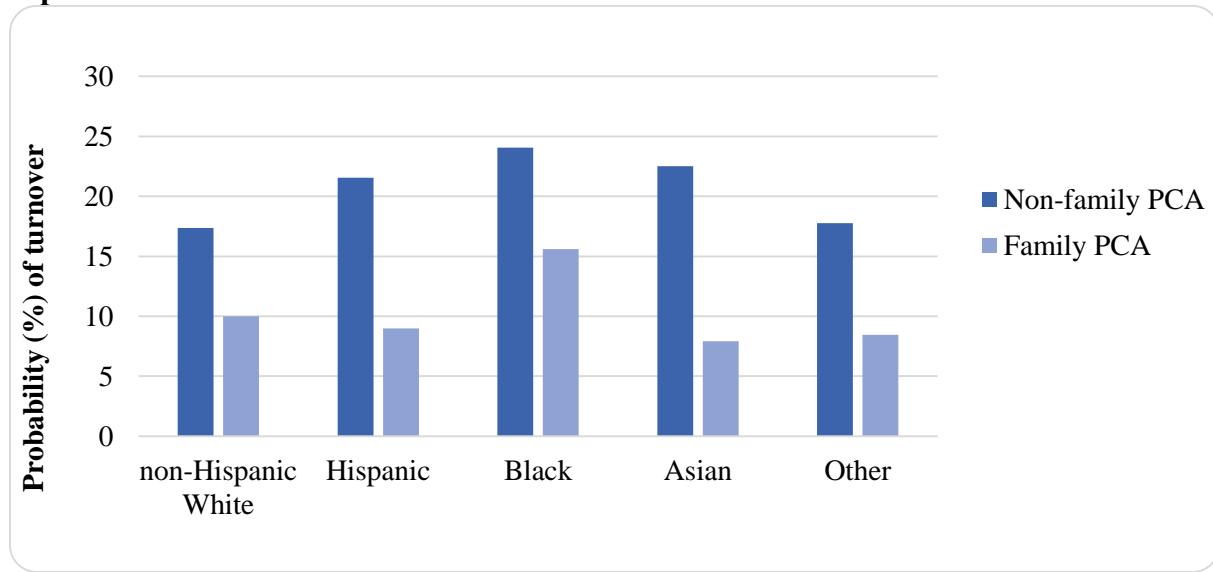
## Charts/Tables

**Figure 1. Among non-family personal care assistants, turnover was lower for those who received higher payment rates.**



Source: California Medicaid claims, Medicaid enrollment, and Case Management Information and Payrolling System (CMIPS). Probability of turnover adjusted for recipient, PCA, and local market factors.

**Figure 2. Racial and ethnic minorities with non-family personal care assistants were more likely to experience turnover.**



Source: California Medicaid claims, Medicaid enrollment, and Case Management Information and Payrolling System (CMIPS).