

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

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Issue: Personal care assistants (PCAs) provide support that enables older adults and individuals with disabilities to remain in home and community settings. This study characterizes the role played by family members and non-family PCAs in California's Medicaid program, which oversees the nation's largest consumer-directed personal care assistance program. We describe factors that affect turnover among PCAs, because turnover is associated with lower quality of care and adverse outcomes for recipients.

Methods: Using state and federal data sources (2006 to 2008) covering first-time recipients of Medicaid personal care assistance in California, we describe care recipients and PCAs, and characterize differences in PCA utilization and turnover across racial and ethnic subgroups.

Findings: The turnover rate among PCAs in California's Medicaid program is relatively low, which may be partly due to high rates of family member participation, which results in lower turnover rates. Among non-family PCAs, low payment rates and caring for racial and ethnic minorities were associated with a higher likelihood of turnover.

Discussion: For those with non-family PCAs, 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 personal care assistance may have greater need of supportive policies to reduce worker turnover.

Key Words: personal care assistants, PCA, workforce turnover

HWRC Website Link: <http://healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/publication/californias-medicaid-personal-care-assistants-characteristics-and-turnover-among-family>