

Safe Home Care Survey

Who participated?

1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
615 personal care attendants (PCAs)

Who were the PCAs?

Mostly female – 79%
Average age – 45 years
56% Black, 19% White, 4% Asian
17% Latino/Hispanic

Work experience:

About four years with current employer
Average hours – 31 hours/week (all jobs)

Occupations:

Personal care attendant 76%
Personal care homemaker 19%
Home health aide 14%
Homemaker 8%
Certified nursing assistant 6%
Companion 5%
Hospice aide 2%

The Safe Home Care Project is a project of the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production, University of Massachusetts Lowell. Funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Award Number 2R01OH008229-05A2.

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Learning with Purpose

The Safe Home Care Project: Safety and Health for Home Care Workers in Social Assistance and Healthcare

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Survey Preliminary Findings for
Personal Care Attendants organized by
1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East
November 2013



Thank you for supporting the Safe Home Care Project survey. Here are some key findings that represent the experience of 615 personal care attendants as they performed a total of 920 consumer visits.

Findings

FOR 615 PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANTS

The majority of personal care attendants (PCAs) reported:

- high job satisfaction
- accomplishing something useful at each visit
- looking forward to their next consumer visit

Positive comments (% of PCAs)

- I probably or definitely will not leave my job – 81%
- I would recommend this job to a friend – 86%
- My work contributes to improving consumers' health – 88%
- I get the respect I deserve at work – 84%
- Stable job; I am not afraid of losing it – 63%

I continue to work in my current job because:

- I enjoy caring for others – 81%
- I feel good about the work I do – 70%
- I have a flexible schedule or hours – 59%
- I can work independently – 57%

Common consumer conditions

(% of recent visits)

- Limited mobility – 65%
- Diabetes – 29%
- Incontinence – 27%
- Respiratory condition – 25%
- Obesity – 20%
- Dementia – 15%

Sharps injury

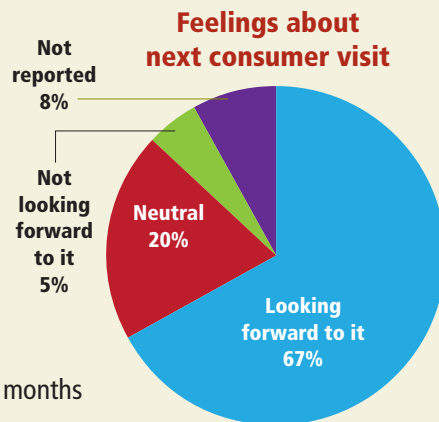
- 2% of PCAs got stuck or cut by a used medical sharp in the past 12 months

Chemical irritants

- Bleach, ammonia or other cleaning products were used in 38% of recent consumer visits.

Infectious agents

- PCAs were exposed to blood or feces in 26% of recent consumer visits.



In the past 12 months, PCAs experienced:

1 out of 3 PCAs (36%) had low back pain

A majority felt it was related to their work.



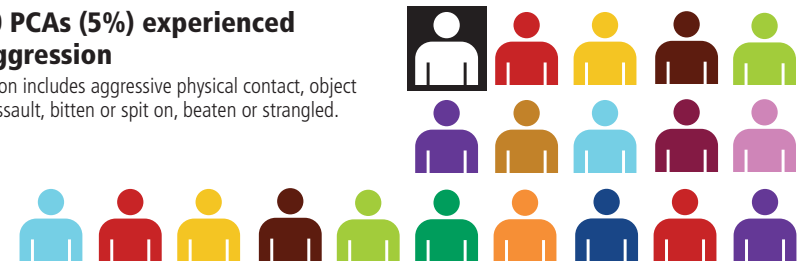
1 out of 7 PCAs (14%) experienced verbal aggression

Verbal aggression includes being yelled at, made to feel bad about self, racist language, or verbal threat of harm.



1 out of 20 PCAs (5%) experienced physical aggression

Physical aggression includes aggressive physical contact, object thrown, sexual assault, bitten or spit on, beaten or strangled.



PCAs reported that they did not feel safe from verbal abuse (in 10% of visits) or physical threat (in 5% of visits) during consumer visits in the past month.

Over the course of their home care careers:

9% of PCAs had an injury or pain

severe enough to result in lost work time or need medical care.



Of this 9% (54 PCAs), in the past 12 months alone, the following lost work time or required medical care:

- 15 PCAs (28%) were assisting with consumer handling
- 13 PCAs (24%) experienced a slip, trip or fall (inside or outside the home)
- 7 PCAs (13%) had a work-related traffic accident
- 1 PCA (2%) received an animal bite