



The Maine Personal Assistance Services Association is a coalition of people employed to provide assistance to persons with disabilities and elders. Maine PASA is organized to empower workers, to build opportunities, to respect human dignity and to improve the quality of our jobs.

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Maine PASA features New Logo and Mission

Thanks to the input of many, the hard work of the development team, and an artist's touch the logo and statements of purpose for the Maine Personal Assistance Services Association are ready for distribution. The message is that Maine has an organization that recognizes and supports direct care/support and personal assistant workers. 'Personal Assistance Services Workers', the people employed to provide assistance, personal care, direct support to individuals with disabilities and elders. There are thousands of people in Maine working in the range of jobs that fit within this group. The most frequently used titles, like CNA, PCA, DSP, are listed in the article written by Diane in this edition of the newsletter. While the titles and work settings are varied there are shared

values and responsibilities and common challenges in these jobs. An association offers workers an opportunity to connect with others workers, to be informed and identify issues and needs important to their work and the people they work for, and to participate in building opportunities for personal and professional growth. Maine PASA is learning from other states and organizations, growing from a development team to a statewide membership list and is spreading its wings through the distribution of the newsletter and brochure. Please help us spread the word. Members are available to speak at meetings and brochures can be mailed by request. 1-800-268-6612 or TTY 207-228-8440.

Maine PASA Updates: Regional and National Check-In

Job Fair Preview Session

Members of Maine PASA were well represented at the Health Care Job Fair in South Portland on May 19th. The brochures and sign up sheets, boosted by the enthusiasm of member outreach successfully informed many Fair attendees and recruited over thirty new members!

New England Coalition of Direct Support Worker Associations

Members of Maine PASA have helped to organize meetings with other grant supported association and direct care/support worker advocates in the New England states. Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont project staff will meet monthly in telephone conferences to exchange information and experience for recognizing and supporting direct care and personal assistant workers.

Massachusetts Worker Registry Project

A successful website and toll-free call number for recruiting and listing direct support professionals to match them to jobs caring for people with developmental disabilities is being expanded. Maine and other New England states have been invited to assist in the development of the site to expand the geographic area served and to enlarge the listing to be a resource for self-directed consumers to find personal assistants. *(continued on page 2)*



**Check out
this month's
Special Insert:**

**Direct Care/Support
Job Titles**

Maine PASA Updates: Regional and National Check-In *(continued from page 1)*

National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals

Maine PASA has been invited to join NADSP by adopting the organizations code of ethics. While Maine PASA's mission covers a wider population of direct care workers there is interest in collaborating with the Alliance as its advocacy for quality, dignity and self-determination are shared interests.

Direct Care Alliance

This national coalition of consumers, workers and concerned providers is a leading organization modeling efforts to build a stable, valued and well-trained direct care workforce in long term care. DCA leads the way in supporting the premise that quality of long term care is directly linked to the quality of jobs. Their website, www.directcarealliance.org, and the DCA Clearinghouse is an excellent resource.

Direct Care Worker Coalition Updates: Creating Better Jobs

The Maine Center for Economic Policy (MECEP), an independent nonpartisan research organization based in Augusta and a member of the Direct Care Worker Coalition, has received a Maine Women's Fund (MWF) grant of \$11,500 for a project to improve the compensation and working conditions of direct care workers in Maine's long-term care system. This project has grown from MECEP's focus on the needs of low-wage workers. In the spring of 2002, MECEP, in collaboration with Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), began building a coalition of key stakeholders - including workers, consumers and providers - to research the direct care worker shortage problem and to advance policy solutions. The MWF grant will support MECEP's work with the Direct Care Workers Coalition and the Bureau of Elder and Adult Services to continue data collection and policy development, and will support MECEP's public education on the issue.

At the May 23rd meeting, Coalition members discussed the direction of their summer study as part of implementation of Maine legislature's recommendations. The Coalition is going to tailor its study to determine the cost of establishing a wage floor (probably \$8.25/hour as was done through BDS for direct care workers) that also includes the cost of the "ripple" effect up the wage scale after a wage floor is set. A research subgroup will meet on June 19th at BEAS, which will be followed by a meeting with the new Labor Commissioner to request the data sources this study needs.

In February we informed you about activities that the Coalition members were involved in the process of applying for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "Better Jobs, Better Care" grant. The Coalition members continue discussing ways of improving PCA jobs, though Maine did not get the grant. The largest PCA agency in the state, Home Resources of Maine, and Sandy River Home Resources recently discussed opportunities for increasing efficiency by sharing training resources and have signed a contract to improve PCA work hours by filling-in on understaffed cases. This initiative will also ensure better coverage for the agencies' customers.

Do You Need Health Insurance Benefits? Watch for Dirigo Health Insurance!

Direct care workers and personal assistants working part-time hours, earning wages that make insurance premiums unaffordable, and/or who work for small employers may get some relief from the state's new plan to expand access to affordable health care coverage for Maine residents. Governor Baldacci is acting on his plan to reform health insurance in Maine and is leading the effort to enact a comprehensive, affordable, subsidized package of insurance benefits for Maine's small business community and individuals who do not have access to job-based coverage. The plan covers all state mandated benefits including mental health services and includes expansion of MaineCare (Medicaid) eligibility. For up-to-date information on the plan, check www.fchn.org, ask your employer for information on their participation, and check the next edition of this newsletter.

Energize for Healthy Living

by Roberta R., Maine PASA member

Energy is strength, force, and the vitality of expression in our lives. Here are some suggestions for recharging energy for your body, mental capacities, and soul.

Tips for Feeding the Body

Start the day off with a good breakfast to recharge the blood sugar levels and provide the energy to start the day. Pack a picnic for work with fruits and vegetables. They are low in calories and high in energy. If you travel, find a beautiful place to have a quiet picnic to revitalizes the soul. Nature can be quite entertaining. Empty, chemical-laden junk foods do nothing but satisfy a temporary craving, real food satisfies your soul and feeds the body. Plan peanut butter in your meal routine as it is a high-energy food and makes a nice snack. Showering in body temperature water for 2 or 3 minutes and then lowering the temperature for 15 to 30 seconds (repeat twice) will boost your energy.

Tips for Feeding the Mind and Spirit

- ☑ Lend a helping hand.
- ☑ Wear red, orange, or yellow to bring happiness in your day. Plan a change of scenery, spending time doing what you want to do, like visiting a museum, looking for antiques, enjoying yard sales, picnicking in nature, reading.
- ☑ “Never esteem anything of advantage to you that will make you break your word or lose your self-respect.” - *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*
- ☑ Practice self-affirmations every day to keep yourself in good spirits (like “I am a smart and talented go-getter”, “I am calm and relaxed no matter what the circumstances are”).
- ☑ Letting go is an important skill to start the healing process and lighten the heart. It takes a lot of strength and courage but it opens our hearts to new opportunities. Listen to your heart, it knows what you need.
- ☑ Get in touch with nature. For example, ride a bike, shovel snow, mow the lawn, rake the leaves.
- ☑ Boredom can bring on chronic fatigue. Stimulate your brain, nourish your creative spirit.
- ☑ A good heart-to heart talk will bring back good energy and restore your connection with other people. Write a letter to a long-lost friend or relative.
- ☑ Plan a special event, so when stress strikes, you will recall the planned event for the future.
- ☑ Work on being a life long learner. Knowledge is power. Empower yourself with reading, going to the movies, and plays. Visit your hometown amenities, they have a lot of information to enrich your life, it's there for the taking.
- ☑ Finally, we must remember everyday we are noble people doing noble work to make changes, one person at a time.

Life Story

input sought by Diane N., Maine PASA member

I decided I needed a new career in August of 2002. I wanted to work with and take care of people, whether they were young or old. So I quit my job of being a receptionist and looked into working in the health care field. I was considering training to become a CNA, but was not sure whether it was a career I wanted and would enjoy. I applied at different hospitals and nursing homes as a PCA and I got hired at The Lamp Alzheimer's Residential Home as a PCA. They hired me knowing that I had no experience, they just saw that I was a caring and loving person. So, The Lamp gave me a chance. While employed at The Lamp, I took an RCS1 course and found that I really enjoyed and loved what I'm doing. I took a CNA course to further my education. While taking my CNA course, I worked part-time and took care of my family at the same time. Though at times everything was very frustrating, my family kept encouraging me to keep going and telling me that everything will be fine. Here it is May, 2003, and I've accomplished what I've wanted to do. I work as a CNA at an elderly retirement home and I love everything I do. So it doesn't matter who you are or where you are in life. If you put your mind to it, you can accomplish anything you want.

Sincerely, SC

Books Recommended by Maine PASA Members

Searching for something special to enrich my life and those around me, I found the book, *Midwife's Tale: the Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*, written by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. Reading Martha's diary entries, I spiritually walked with her to the local families while she delivered babies. Martha went out in all types of weather. She was committed to birthing babies. As I followed her from home to home I learned she had patience with different values and beliefs. As I read about Martha's life, I too, realized over the twenty years of working in elder's homes I was making a difference on a lot of people just like Martha. (Roberta R.)

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf by Leo Buscaglia, Ph.D., chronicles the change of life and seasons for a leaf named Freddie illustrating the delicate balance between life and death. Excellent for children and adults dealing with end of life situations. I bought it for my Nana as she was dying with terminal cancer and she requested that it be read to her over and over. Very special reading. (Diane N.)



You're Invited to Join Us!

Are you a CNA, PCA, HHA, or BS? Do you provide direct support or care for a person with a disability?

Contact us for more information!

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Direct Care/Support Job Titles

by Diane N., Olga G., and Elise S.

One of the challenges of organizing Maine PASA and raising people's awareness about direct care and personal support work and workers has been to explain who direct care/support and personal assistants are. Diane took on the challenge of finding and defining the many job titles used in the health care, home care, residential and assisted living facilities, and the range of support services available to people with disabilities and elders in Maine. This was an interesting task and she found that changes are being made in job titles and educational requirements, and that skills and experience may cross job settings and titles. We recommend that if you're looking for a job or entering the field of direct care and personal assistance that you don't limit yourself to specific titles. Your skills may apply to multiple titles and in more than one work setting. Be sure to call the human resources manager to see if you qualify. And don't feel badly about being a little confused about the titles and educational requirements; you're not alone. Many people were contacted to prepare this listing and to provide general reference information. The information is subject to change. One general source is the National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates prepared by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (www.bls.gov/home.htm) and the Maine Department of Labor's Job Bank (www.ajb.org/me).

BS I (Behavioral Specialist I)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent plus completion of a 50-hour approved training program (employers may help you get the training while employed).

General Description: Often part-time. Provides in-home and community-based support for children with emotional and/or behavioral disabilities.

Wage: \$9.50–\$12.00

DSP (Direct Support/Service Professional)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent plus a valid driver's license and good driving record. Some employers prefer First Aid and CPR training and previous experience. Employers are willing to train.

General Description: Provides support to adults with mental retardation.

Wage: \$8.15 (rates vary with title, experience, setting and region)

DSS (Direct Support Staff)

This is a general title used for job posting with Maine's Job Bank.

Education: High school diploma or equivalent, valid driver's license.

General Description: Provides support to people with disabilities and elders with personal care, activities of daily living and socialization, and provides transportation.

Wage: \$8.15

HS (Habilitation Specialist) >NEW TITLE<

Education: High school diploma or equivalent plus relevant experience. (A requirement for the 50-hour training, described above for the BSI, is being considered by MaineCare.)

General Description: In-home and community-based support services for children with mental retardation and autism.

Wage: Not available at this time.

In-home Support Specialist

Education: High school diploma or equivalent and experience (Bachelor's degree preferred).

General description: Provides assistance to children with mental retardation in the home/family setting, in coordination for family/parent caregivers.

Wage: \$10.00 – 13.00

MHRT and MHRT/Community Certificates (Mental Health Rehabilitation Technician)

Refers to the certificate courses, procedures and approved programs established in Maine for mental health practitioners.

Please see <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/cfl/MHRT/communityguidelines.htm> for complete information.

PSS (Personal Support Specialist)

Refers to a training course and not commonly used as a job title at this time.

Education: The curriculum is a recently developed program that combines PCA and RCS courses in a standardized curriculum for people working in either home health, assisted living or residential care settings. The use of the title becomes effective September 2003 and allows the first 20 hours of the PSS course to satisfy the first 20 hours of training in a CNA course taken within 2 years. PCAs and RCS1s should check on retraining needs if they have not worked in an assisted living facility or home health.

General Description: The curriculum is for people who provide personal care assistance to people with disabilities and elders.

Wage: Requirements expected in September 2003, wage ranges are not available at this time.

RA (Residential Advisor)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent and experience.

General description: One of many titles used by agencies for their staff who provide assistance to children or adults with mental retardation living in residential/group homes.

Wage: \$8.50–\$11.00 (Senior RA level)

RCS (Residential Care Specialist)

Refers to a training course that has been replaced; see PSS for updated information.

Vocational Resource Specialist (Business Development Specialist and Employment Specialist)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent and experience, with varied requirements for driver's license and post-secondary education and preference for Bachelor's degree.

General description: Provide assistance to adults with disabilities to find and keep employment.

Wage: \$9.00–\$11.00 (varies with position, qualifications, agency, and region)

CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent plus the Board of Nursing approved program that involves 150 hours of classroom plus clinical time. Successful completion of the training results in certification and listing on the Maine CNA Registry. Continuing education requirements are 12 hours of training and 8 hours of work every year to stay certified.

General Description: Provides care under the supervision of an RN, in a hospital, nursing home, home care and in assisted living facilities.

Wage: \$9.12–\$10.35

CNA-M (Certified Nursing Assistant trained to pass medications)

Education: CNA training requirements plus an addition 120 hours in a Board of Nursing approved program, plus work experience (1 year full-time or 2 years part-time). Continuing education requirements: CNA plus an 8-hour class every two years for re-certification.

General Description: Under the supervision of an RN provides the services of a CNA plus can distributed certain medications in a long-term care setting only.

Wage: \$9.12–\$10.35

CRMA (Certified Residential Care Medication Aide)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent plus an approved 24-hour program.

General Description: Under direct supervision of an RN; passes medications and performs other duties as trained and directed by the supervisor in residential care or assisted living facility only.

Wage: \$8.11–\$10.18

MT (Medication Technician)

See CNA-M.

HHA (Home Health Aide)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent, plus Board of Nursing approved; CNA training (150 hours plus clinical experience).

General Description: Provides services ordered by a physician and under the supervision on an RN in the home setting. Duties include personal care assistance, assistance with therapy, prosthetic care and dressing changes.

Wage: \$8.43–\$9.31

Homemaker

Education: No requirements.

General description: Provides assistance for housekeeping to people receiving services in their homes.

Wage: \$7.00–\$7.50

PCA (Personal Care Assistant)

Education: Health care agencies/facilities require PCAs to have a High school diploma or equivalent plus a 40-hour approved training course taught by an RN. Others will hire PCAs without educational requirements.

General description: PCAs employed in-home care and assisted living or residential care facilities are supervised by RNs to provide assistance with personal care, activities of daily living, provide transportation and may perform light housekeeping work.

Wage: \$7.50–\$8.75

RCS 1 (Residential Care Specialist 1)

Education: High school diploma or equivalent plus 36 hours of approved training.

General description: Provides personal care assistance to assisted living residents.

Wage: \$7.72–\$9.81

Psychiatric Aide (Mental Health Assistant/CNA)

Education: CNA requirements, basic life support certification, MH experience recommended.

General description: Assists people who are mentally impaired or emotionally disturbed in a facility setting under the supervision of an RN or medical staff.

Wage: \$11.04

CHW (Community Health Workers)

Other titles for frontline paraprofessional work in community/public health and health promotion include Lay/Peer/Community Health Advisor or Aide, Home Visitor, Health Advocate, Community Health Representative (CHR) and Public Health Aide (PHA).

Education: Positions vary and may be volunteer or paid depending on program/service

General description: Employees in the health care system who serve as community members and work in the community setting to serve as connector between health care consumers and providers to promote health among groups that have traditionally lacked access to adequate care.

Wage: Positions vary and may be volunteer or paid depending on program/service.

Consumer Directed Attendant

Education: Varies based on consumer preference and need. Training is provided by the consumer.

General description: Attendant is hired on an individual basis (not through an agency) by a consumer to provide services to assist a person with disabilities to live in their home and to support independent living options.

Wage: The average CD-PAS wage for Personal Care Attendant is \$7.70/hr.

Informal and/or Paid Caregivers

Many people provide services to individuals with disabilities and elders who need assistance in their homes and with activities of daily living. Most workers are family members and friends and the arrangements do not include (formal) employment. Some people do receive payments through private arrangements. The qualifications and payments vary widely and most individuals and families are extremely thankful for the help.