

Open Letter to Premier Doug Ford re: PSWs (1/2)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some PSW'S work in private individual homes earning \$14.00 hourly, no pluses. Government-paid PSW's in these same homes may earn \$16.50 to 20.00 plus around \$11.00 an hour travel time and 42 cents a kilometer, plus.

Some duties: meal prep, feeding, meds reminders, toileting, preparing bath, undress persons (client?), getting them in and out of bath, wash, dress them which may require putting on waistband, leg, joint, toe, feet or other body support, skin care, hair care, mouth care, denture care, eye care, general body care and wellbeing. Bed-ridden/palliative persons are completely cared for in bed including bed linen changes while person is in bed. Sometimes care is done for in-home deceased persons.

Some persons must be rolled, slid, or lifted otherwise a single PSW will pivot person from bed to wheelchair to washroom to recliner and back to bed. It is impressive how they can do it several times a day even when persons are large and not steady on their feet. Now there is widespread 'pivoting?'. Hear how people 'pivot?' from coffee to tea, blonde hair dye to red hair dye, and the likes. Pivoting cheapened?

Sometimes a person requires two PSW's doing the same work side by side, one earning higher wages plus benefits, the other just glad for the job.

After personal care PSW becomes domestic on the job: put away groceries, dusting, change bed linens, make beds like they look in magazines, complete with many bed ornaments, clean bathrooms, sweep, vacuum, mop, sort, wash, dry, fold, put away laundry, wash, dry, and store dishes, sort, take out garbage, recycling, compost. Work to be done to families' taste. Families sit around while PSWs do chores, expressing glee that they 'don't have to do it?'. PSW's take persons and pets to vets, salons, shopping and other appointments, using their own vehicles, incurring extra insurance costs.

Some PSW's feel hurt and sad about things they are asked to do as if they are just disrespected knowing house cleaners charge \$20-40 or more an hour. Most families are reasonable but still like as much as they can get out of the PSW's who are usually women, immigrants, 'visible minorities?' or temporary foreign workers feeling pressured to deliver on the demands.

A PSW is expected to adjust to the whims of families such as large animals indoors, heavy pet odours, air fresheners, perfumes, aerosols, chemicals, second hand/third hand smoke, other toxins or unpleasantness, judgemental families, unwanted comments and touching. Increasingly PSW's work in front of cameras, knowingly or not, for the benefit of families. 'Stars?? Suspects?

Whether rain, snow or storm, a PSW shows up for work and finds a note 'Gone to get hair/nails done?' may not get paid for that visit. 'Client's?' beautification!

However, nearly all seniors living alone are pleasant. They look forward to the PSW's visits. Helping them is joyful to most PSW's who also look forward to seeing these friendly old people (old!) and don't mind giving them some extra time, attention or help especially if they arrive to find person on floor, or hurt, sad or lonely.

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