



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam

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Governor Northam Authorizes Hazard Pay for Home Health Workers

~ Federal funding will cover one-time payment for work at height of COVID-19 pandemic ~

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today announced \$73 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to provide hazard pay to home health personal care attendants who served high-risk populations during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A one-time, pre-tax payment of \$1,500 will be available to an estimated 43,500 home health care workers who provide personal care and who served Medicaid members between March 12 and June 30, 2020.

“Home health care workers are often unseen, unsung, and underpaid, but they do the vital work of caring for vulnerable Virginians,” **said Governor Northam**. “Their jobs put them at higher risk during this pandemic, and this hazard payment is a way we can acknowledge that they put themselves in harm’s way to help others. I want to thank our home health care workers for the work they do every day to keep people healthy.”

Home health care workers provide services that are critical in enabling older Virginians or people with disabilities to continue living in their own homes. In addition to the hazard payments, the state budget that went into effect July 1 included a seven percent pay raise over two years for home health workers, and the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) is working to provide those workers with personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer.

“The majority of home health care workers are women, and women of color, providing critical health services for low pay,” **said Senator Louise Lucas, Chairwoman of the Senate Education and Health Committee.** “This hazard payment acknowledges the essential work that they do and the risks they took especially in the early months of the pandemic, when less was known about this virus. It is one way we can show appreciation to the people who do such important work.”

“Home health care workers are unsung heroes even in the best of times, and the pandemic has put them at higher risk and under greater stress,” **said Delegate Mark Sickles, Chairman of the House Health, Welfare, and Institutions Committee.** “This hazard payment is a way to show these workers that we value them and the essential work that they do.”

“Home health care workers have been on the front lines of the pandemic, working every day to keep our community safe,” **said David Broder, President of Service Employees International Union Virginia 512,** which represents personal care attendants. “Home care workers, primarily Black and brown women, are instrumental in helping older adults and people with disabilities lead healthy and active lives, safe at home, and in the community. That was especially important earlier this year when nursing homes faced outbreaks. This hazard pay recognizes their essential work. It’s an important investment that will support families and keep overall costs down for our healthcare system.”

DMAS, which oversees Virginia’s Medicaid program, will work with providers over the coming weeks to administer the payments to eligible workers.

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