

**Nationally, one in every four nursing home workers and two out of five home care workers lack health insurance coverage.**

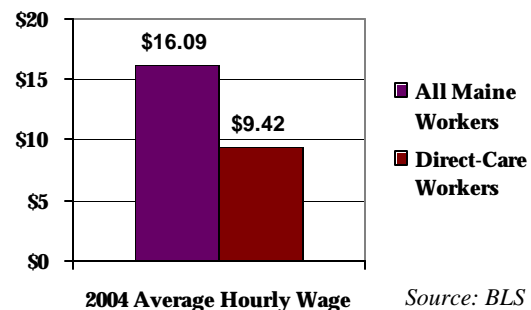
## **MANY OF MAINE'S DIRECT CARE WORKERS DO NOT HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE**

### ***Most home care providers cannot afford to offer health insurance.***

- There are 8,700 home care workers in Maine. Most are not offered insurance through their employers.
- About 75% of all long-term care in Maine is funded through the Medicaid program. Medicaid reimburses home care on a fee-for-service basis, at a rate of \$14.98/hour. Most of this rate goes towards the cost of labor, including wages, taxes, and workers compensation. The rest must cover recruitment, training, transportation, safety precautions, and many other administrative mandates.
- Home care workers' schedules fluctuate with client demand and are often part-time. As a contingency workforce, they do not earn sick or vacation time. Providers are reimbursed only when services are rendered.
- The unpredictable schedule of home care services and limited Medicaid reimbursement rates make it impossible for most home care employers to purchase health insurance for their direct-care workers, especially if they have a high percentage of Medicaid clients.

### ***Low wages put health insurance out of reach for individual direct-care workers.***

- In Maine, the average direct-care worker earns **\$6.67 an hour less** than that of the average worker.
- Facility-based long-term care employers are more apt to offer health insurance, but many direct-care workers cannot afford to pay the required co-pays so they don't sign up.
- Expensive individual policies are generally out of the question for these low-wage workers.



## **LONG-TERM CARE CONSUMERS AND EMPLOYERS PAY THE COST FOR DIRECT-CARE WORKERS NOT HAVING HEALTH INSURANCE**

### ***The lack of health benefits traps employers in a cycle of ongoing shortages.***

- Non-competitive wages and benefits result in high turnover rates. It costs an employer approximately \$2,500 to \$3,500 to replace a direct-care worker. Shortages make it harder on the workers who stay.
- The worker shortage compromises ability of employers to meet the state's need for high-quality services to elders and people with disabilities.

### ***Availability of health insurance impacts quality of care***

- Maine surveys of long-term care consumers find that stable relationships with frontline staff are a key component of their satisfaction.
- But with low wages and no health insurance, workers are less apt to seek medical care when they need it. This compromises the quality of consumer care because workers are forced to:
  - **Miss shifts** due to back injuries or chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension.
  - **Come to work sick** because they cannot afford to take a day off.

## **QUALITY LONG TERM CARE REQUIRES HEALTHY DIRECT CARE WORKERS. MAINE WORKERS NEED AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE.**