

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

housework, bathing and dressing are not currently guaranteed the minimum wage. As a practical matter, the local market for the aides who visit for part of the day does pay at least minimum wage, but those who are staying 24 hours are getting about \$5 to \$5.75 an hour.

Mar. 20, 2014

Live-in nannies, maids and aides that help the elderly and disabled with meals, housework, bathing and dressing are not currently guaranteed the minimum wage.

As a practical matter, the local market for the aides who visit for part of the day does pay at least minimum wage, but those who are staying 24 hours are getting about \$5 to \$5.75 an hour.

Starting next January, by federal requirement, the rules are going to change.

Families with live-in domestic workers will have to pay them minimum wage — though not overtime — for all hours they are present at home, unless they are taking a meal break or sleeping.

How the unpaid hours might be determined in Connecticut is still in flux. A bill that passed out of the legislature's labor committee Tuesday evening suggests that sleep time will be unpaid, but only if the worker gets five hours of uninterrupted sleep. If not, each call for service during the night will have to be paid.

Peter Tercyak, chairman of the committee, said legislators would like to make the law more generous toward workers than it is currently written. "The bill is just a vehicle for the conversation," he said.

But the biggest change will be hiring workers through agencies or registries.

Currently, reputable agencies that provide personal care aides charge about \$1,400 a

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

health care benefits, workers compensation, mileage reimbursement, 401(k) match, and other overhead and profits to the agency.

Next year, agencies and registries will be required to pay overtime. So that five-day worker who is currently making \$625 would be paid \$805.20. The two-day worker would be paid \$265.35, instead of \$250, assuming three unpaid half-hour meal breaks and eight hours of sleep time, also unpaid.

So, what was costing the family \$1,400 a week will cost them \$1,600 a week.

Briana Fernandez, 21, works weekends as a personal care attendant and gets paid \$240 for spending 48 hours at the home. She says it's reasonable. "It's more affordable for the client," she said.

Medicaid pays less per day for live-in care than private parties are charged — Medicaid pays \$1,260 a week — and so paying the two workers a combined total of \$1,070 becomes impossible for agencies who also are paying for Social Security taxes, health insurance and so on.

And for the small minority of families who have just one live-in worker who takes no days off — 315 clients at Companions and Homemakers, an agency that serves 3,500 to 4,000 clients around the state — the cost would be \$2,297, once you add the agency's share to the now-doubled weekly pay for the worker .

Linda Grigerek, owner of Companions and Homemakers, says she thinks it's only right that hourly workers be subject to minimum wage rules. She said this is the first year that she's starting hourly companion workers — those who don't do heavy housework or bathing and dressing help — at only minimum wage.

Her agency charges elderly people who need more help \$19.50 an hour, and Medicaid pays \$18.88 for those duties. Those workers are paid \$11.40 to \$12 an hour, she said.

Grigerek said she recognizes the goal is to pay these workers more — she says she

Hello. It looks like you're using an ad blocker that may prevent our website from working properly. To receive the best experience possible, please make sure any blockers are switched off and refresh the page.

If you have any questions or need help you can email us

But those workers won't enjoy the protections agencies offer, Grigerek said. Not only does working for an agency give workers health care, workers' compensation protection and help toward retirement, she said, but it also protects them from family conflicts and even exploitation.

Grigerek said many of her live-in workers have worked for her agency for decades, moving from one client to the next as they die. She said if these workers thought their pay and room and board arrangement was unfair, they wouldn't keep taking the assignments.

She said that the state regulation sounds like an administrative nightmare, and that where elderly clients are not sleeping during the night, her agency insists on a night-shift worker in addition to the live-in help.

---

Copyright 2014 – The Hartford Courant

Benefits • Payroll

CPA Practice Advisor is registered with the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a sponsor of continuing professional education on the National Registry of CPE Sponsors.

© 2024 Firmworks, LLC. All rights reserved