



MassHealth Personal Care Attendant (PCA) Program

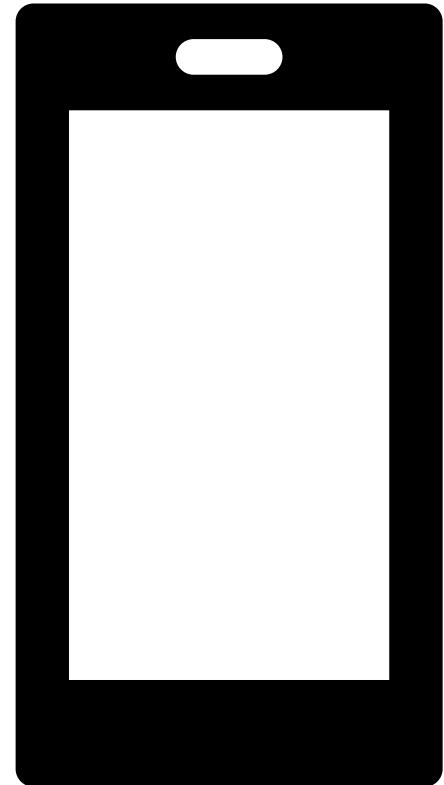
Programmatic and Regulatory Changes

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

December 2025

Joining from a Mobile Device

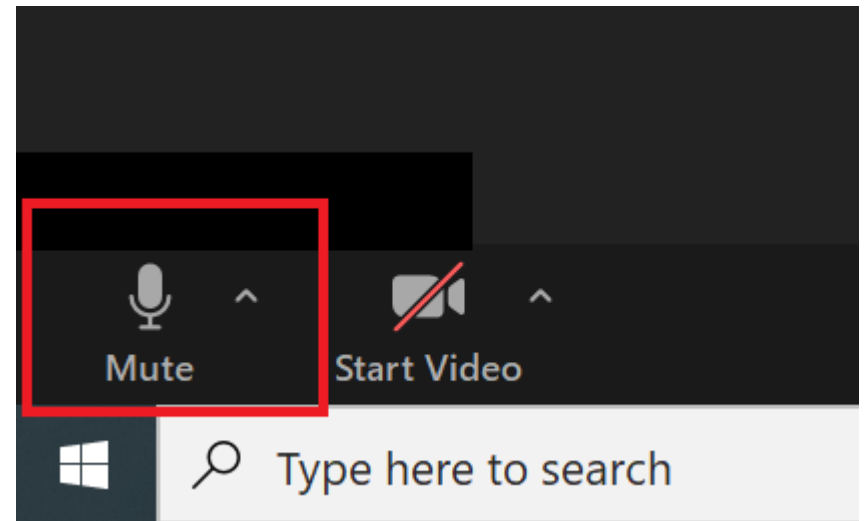
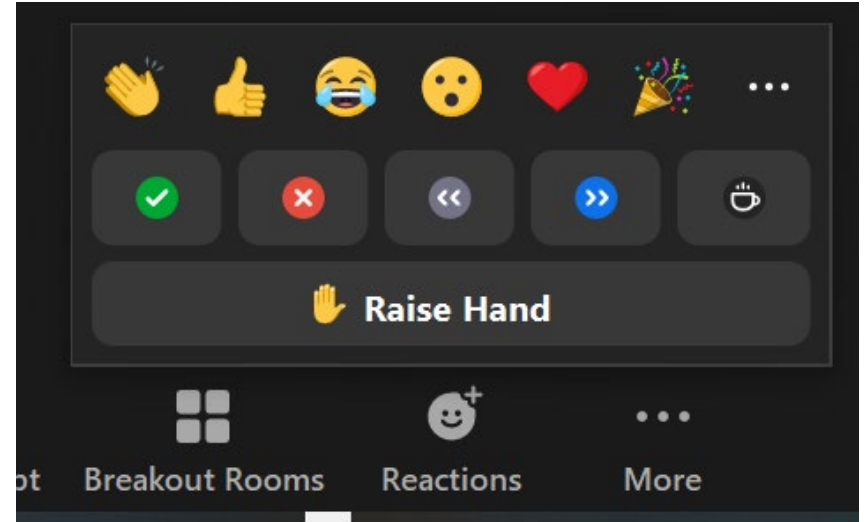
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 - Join by calling in
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- Information session details, including call in information and the meeting password, can be found online at mass.gov by searching “Notice of PCA Public Information Session”.
- If you are having difficulty joining via the mobile application, please call in using the information provided in the communications sent for this Information session.
- If you call in, the deck we are reviewing will be posted on mass.gov and can be found by searching “PCA Public Information Session”.



MassHealth asks that you please hold all comments until the end of the presentation.

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- All attendees are in listen-only mode for this presentation.
- If you need to unmute your line to ask a question, you can get MassHealth's attention by "raising your hand" by clicking the Reactions button and choosing Raise a Hand.
- When you are called on to speak, you need to unmute your line. You can do so by following these instructions:
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- Closed captions are available during this session for those using their computer.
- A Spanish Interpreter is provided for this meeting. To choose the Spanish channel, click Interpretation  in the meeting controls and select the Spanish language channel.
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- This Public Information Session includes a presentation by MassHealth followed by an opportunity for attendees to provide input. **Please hold all comments and questions until the end of the presentation.**
- Attendees can provide input by either typing their comment into the chat section or by unmuting and verbally giving their comments once called upon.
 - MassHealth asks that individuals providing comments indicate their role as a stakeholder. For example, identify if you are a consumer, a PCA, a PCM employee, etc.
 - Feedback will be prioritized in the following order:
 1. A MassHealth representative will read any comments submitted to the comments section.
 2. A MassHealth representative will call on anyone using the “raise hand” feature.
 3. Attendees will have the opportunity to unmute and provide feedback.
 - MassHealth anticipates that many individuals may want to provide feedback. We ask that you be as concise as possible to ensure that all attendees who want to provide input have time to do so.
- MassHealth will respond to questions at the end of this session.
- Written responses will be accepted at any time at PCAfeedback@mass.gov

Why is MassHealth Holding this Public Information Session?

Public Information Sessions are voluntary. Attendance is **NOT** required.

- MassHealth is holding Public Information Sessions to discuss changes being made to the MassHealth Personal Care Attendant (“PCA”) program.
- In this Public Information Session, MassHealth will share policy updates on regulatory and policy changes.
- This Public Information Session is not a training.
- MassHealth will respond to feedback and **answer questions at the end of the session**. Please do not raise your hand until the end.
- This presentation will be available to download, after the Public Information Session is over. To download a copy, visit mass.gov and search for “PCA Public Information Session” in the search box.
- The presentation will also be available in Spanish.

MassHealth asks that you please hold all comments until the end of the presentation.

Recent and Upcoming Program Changes

- Complex Care
- Electronic Medical Record (EMR)
- CORI/SORI
- Consumer Handbook & FAQs
- Minimum Age Threshold
- New Hire Paperwork
- EVV Live-In Exemption
- IRS Exemption
- Exclusion of Overtime as Taxable Wages
- Overtime Policy & Weekly-Hour Limit

Complex Care

What is Complex Care?

- The collective bargaining agreement for 2023–2026 between the PCA Quality Home Care Workforce Council and 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East provided that PCAs who work for consumer employers requiring "complex care", as defined by MassHealth, will receive a pay differential.
- Beginning January 1, 2026, MassHealth is implementing the personal care attendant (PCA) complex care add-on. PCA providers who work for certain MassHealth members approved for PCA complex care tasks will receive an increase of \$3.25 per hour.
- MassHealth members who need a PCA complex care task performed by a PCA, and who do not have that task approved in their PCA assessments, can work with their primary care providers (PCPs) to have a PCP Summary Form completed to add a complex care task to their PCA assessment.

Who is Eligible for Complex Care?

Eligibility for PCA complex care requires the following:

- In accordance with 130 CMR 422.422(C) and (D), MassHealth or its designee must have determined that the member requires physical assistance with digital rectal stimulation (DRS) or feedings via enteral tube (G & J), and these tasks must be reflected in the member's PCA evaluation.
- Members must have a PCP Summary Form showing the clinical need for assistance with these tasks and whether the tasks are appropriate for a PCA provider to perform.
- PCA complex care tasks cannot be approved when they are considered a skilled service or when there are comorbidities that disallow the task from being completed by an unskilled worker. For example, MassHealth does not approve PCA time for enteral tube feedings (G & J) when there is an aspiration risk.

What are the Requirements?

PCP Summary Form

- A PCP Summary Form is required to be submitted along with any Prior Authorization request (Initial, Reevaluation, or Adjustment), detailing the member's need for the complex service. The form should contain the member's diagnoses, medications, and conditions that require the member to have physical assistance with DRS and/or feeding via enteral tube (G & J). To ensure the member's safety, the form must also state that it is clinically appropriate for a PCA provider to complete these tasks.

New Consumers

- Fee-for-service members who want to enroll in the PCA Program must tell their Personal Care Management (PCM) agency if they need assistance with either DRS or feeding via enteral tube (G & J).

Current PCA Program Consumers

- If a fee-for-service member does not have time authorized in their PCA assessment to complete at least one of the complex care tasks above, they are responsible for asking their PCM agency to adjust their PCA assessment.

Please refer to [Personal Care Attendant Bulletin 17](#)

Electronic Medical Record (EMR)

What is an Electronic Medical Record (EMR)?

- Consumers are required to have a PCP Summary Form for all Initial Evaluations and all Re-evaluations that include Complex Care tasks.
- For Re-evaluations, a copy of the Consumer's Electronic Medical Record (EMR) can be substituted for the PCP Summary Form if the Re-evaluation does not include Complex Care tasks.
 - This is detailed in the PCM Contract Amendment 6, effective January 1, 2026
- The Consumer's EMR needs to include:
 - Chronic disabling condition(s) that require them to need PCA Services and ICD-10 codes
 - Date of onset for chronic disabling condition(s) that require them to need PCA Services
 - Medications for chronic disabling condition(s) that require them to need PCA Services
 - At least 2 consumer identifiers (ex. Name, date of birth, MassHealth ID, etc.)
 - Date of most recent visit with PCP or specialist related to the chronic disabling condition (must be within the last 2 years)
- An FAQ has been drafted to provide further guidance to the network on the parameters around EMR submission.

CORI/SORI

CORI and SORI

What is a CORI and a SORI?

- A Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) is a background check that returns information about a person's criminal records history.
- A Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) is a background check that returns information about a person's sexual offenses history

When will CORI/SORI go into effect?

- Beginning this Spring, MassHealth will implement a formal Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and Sex Offender Registry Information (SORI) background check process for the PCA program. These checks will only be performed at the request of the consumer employer.

Why is MassHealth making this change?

- The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) published a report in 2019 which recommended that the PCA Program improve information available to Consumers about the CORI and SORI processes and highlighted the need for more robust Consumer training to support these efforts. [MassHealth and Health Safety Net Annual Report, 2019](#)
- The new process will allow PCA Consumer-employers to obtain a CORI and/or a SORI background check for existing or potential PCAs - if they choose.

What are the Overarching Goals and Principles for CORI and SORI?

The new process is designed with the following principles and goals in mind:

- **Principles**

- Program Integrity: Respond to the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) recommendation for enhanced CORI and SORI educational materials
- Consumer-direction: Consumers maintain choice and control over their long-term care services including who they hire to provide those services
- Dignity of Risk: Consumers understand and accept the risks associated with their hiring decisions

- **Goals**

- Align with Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) and Sex Offender Registration Board (SORB) regulations and requirements
- Incorporate targeted CORI/SORI information into existing functional skills training (FST)
- Include information that help Consumers understand and navigate the CORI and SORI processes
- Support Consumers in making informed decisions during the hiring process
- Educate Consumers about the regulations and notification requirements

Consumer Handbook & FAQs

What is the Consumer Handbook & Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)?

- A workgroup was created in 2024 to update the PCA Consumer Handbook. The purpose of the workgroup sessions was to collect feedback and propose changes to the PCA Consumer Handbook.
- Updates made to the Consumer Handbook include:
 - Concise language and user-friendly formatting
 - A notes section at the end of the handbook for Consumers to write in
 - Language reflecting all programmatic and regulatory changes to the PCA Program
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP) information
- The target date for release is January 1, 2026

What is the focus of the Consumer and PCA Focused FAQs

MassHealth is working to improve awareness and understanding of the PCA program by creating FAQs that answer common questions about the PCA Program, focusing on the Consumer's role as an employer and on the PCA's role as an employee and as a MassHealth provider.

- Consumer Employment FAQ
- PCA Employment FAQ
- CORI/SORI FAQ
- Employment Eligibility Verification FAQ

PCA Providers Age Requirement

What is the Minimum Age to be a PCA?

How old must you be to be a PCA?

- New PCA Regulations at **130 CMR 422.404(A)(1)(d)(4)** require a PCA to be at least 16 years old to provide PCA services.
- Effective January 1, 2026, minors between the ages of 14 - 15 will no longer be allowed to work as PCAs.
- Beginning in December 2025, MassHealth will inform Consumers and PCAs impacted by this change.
 - The current number of impacted PCAs is roughly 86

New Hire Process

What are the New Hire Process Changes?

Effective Spring 2026, MassHealth will make important changes to the new hire process to ensure the PCA Program is compliant with both state and federal laws and regulations:

1. Consumers must complete and submit the required new hire forms
2. Consumer-employers must submit copies of their PCA's identity and employment authorization documentation (EADs) along with the I-9
3. MassHealth will use e-Verify, the federal web-based employment eligibility verification system, to confirm eligibility to work in the United States
4. A PCA unique identification number will only be created once all required forms have been received and the PCA's employment eligibility has been verified
5. A PCA may begin providing PCA services and be paid for providing services **only** after they have been issued a PCA ID number

Required NHP forms:

- W-4
- M-4 (if applicable)
- Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification
- Submission of copies of the PCA's employment authorization documentation (new)
- Consumer Agreement
- PCA Provider Agreement
- PCA Provider Contact Information Form
- Direct Deposit Information

EVV Live-in Exemption

What is an EVV Live-in Exemption?

- An EVV Live-in Exemption is a waiver from using EVV if the consumer and the PCA live in the same household.
- **Updated live-in Exemption Policy for Electronic Visit Verification (EVV):**
 - Individuals must share a residential address to receive the live-in exemption
 - Proof of residence is required to be approved for a live-in exemption
- **What is changing?**
 - Spending 120 hours or more at a consumer residence will not qualify for the exemption
 - MassHealth will begin auditing exemptions to ensure compliance
- **MassHealth will be updating the following documents and resources to reflect these updates:**
 - Live-in Exemption Renewal Letter
 - EVV Start Packet/New Consumer Materials
 - MassHealth and Tempus FI Website
- **Tempus FI and PCMs are available to support Consumer questions regarding this policy**

Difficulty of Care Payments

What are Difficulty of Care Payments?

- **Recent IRS Special Ruling:**

- Allows a federal and state income tax exemption to wages the Commonwealth pays to a PCA residing in the same home as a Consumer and where the PCA provides personal care services considered by the IRS as difficulty of care payments.

- **How to Apply for the Difficulty of Care Federal/State Income Tax Exclusion**

- Visit the Tempus Unlimited Fiscal Intermediary website at www.tempusunlimited.org/ to download and complete the Application for the Difficulty of Care Federal/State Income Tax Exclusion
- Submit the completed Application to Tempus FI no later than December 1, 2025, to go into effect on January 1, 2026.
- If the Application is submitted after December 1, 2025, Tempus FI will process applications on a rolling basis and will deduct federal and state income taxes until such time as the exemption has been processed into the payroll system. All applications will be processed with prospective payments tax exempted.

Overtime Wages Deduction

What is the Overtime Wage Deduction?

- **Recently Enacted Federal Law, OBBBA, changed certain tax rules:**
 - In certain circumstances, a PCA can claim a deduction for the qualified overtime compensation.
 - Qualified overtime compensation is defined as the overtime wages that exceed your regular rate of pay, or more plainly, the “half” portion of “time-and-a-half” compensation.
 - One requirement to claim the deduction is that the overtime wage is separately reported on a Form W-2, Form 1099, or other specified statement furnished to the individual.
- **How to Find the Amount of Qualified Overtime Compensation:**
 - For tax year 2025, a PCA will find the qualified overtime compensation amount on Form W-2, Box 14, using code “QOC.” Form W-2 for tax year 2025 will be mailed to PCAs in January 2026 and available via the Employee Self-Service (ESS) Portal, also known as the “Paystub Portal,” on Tempus FI’s website.
 - Future Years: a PCA will find the qualified overtime compensation amount on Form W-2, Box 12, using code “TT.”

Overtime Policy & Weekly- Hour Limit

What is the Weekly-Hour Limit?

- Effective January 1, 2026, PCA Regulations 130 CMR 422.412(K) and 422.418(A)(2) establish a weekly-hour limit.
 - PCAs may only work up to **66 hours per week, across Consumers.**
- The weekly-hour limit includes only hours that the PCA spends providing PCA services; the limit does **not** include:
 - Travel time hours paid to PCAs
 - EVV training, NHO, and other training hours paid to PCAs

What are the Overtime Policy Updates?

- During COVID, MassHealth paused enforcement of its overtime policy. Starting in January, MassHealth will begin enforcing the overtime policy.
- Under certain circumstances, a consumer may request authorization for a PCA to work more than 50 hours, and up to a maximum of 66 hours in a single week, as outlined in program regulations at 130 CMR 422.418 (A).
- MassHealth will review the consumer's request, and if approved, will issue a single overtime authorization for a limited time, and in some cases, the authorization will remain valid for the duration of the PA for PCA services.
- A consumer may request overtime approval if they have a temporary or long-term need for a PCA to work over 50 hours a week, but not more than 66 hours, and include documentation to support the request, as applicable.
- Overtime compliance enforcement will follow the same process as the Weekly-Hour limit policy, which includes notices (3 strikes) and educational resources.

What is the Weekly-Hour Limit Compliance Policy?

- **Education and Noticing**

- Consumers and PCAs will be informed via letter and Everbridge notification when they have violated the policy. After 3 violations, a referral will be generated to MassHealth for potential termination from the PCA program
- Consumers will be reached out to by their PCM, and the notices will include links to educational materials

- **Expungement Process (Violation Removal Process)**

- After 5 full consecutive pay periods (10 weeks) of compliance, the individual is removed from the violation pathway

- **Returning to the PCA Workforce**

- If a PCA is terminated, they may return to the workforce after 9 months
- If, after returning to the workforce, the PCA violates the policy again, the PCA will be permanently terminated as a PCA provider
- Consumers may return on a case-by-case basis, and alternative personal care services will be offered

What Types of Overtime Authorizations Are Available?

Time-limited Authorizations (Temporary)

- The consumer needs time to hire additional PCAs, and at least one of the following applies
 - The consumer placed multiple ads/used multiple resources for seeking PCAs, but received no responses for PCAs that could appropriately fulfill their personal care needs, including registering on a PCA directory website, and using that website to try to recruit PCAs
 - The consumer has interviewed multiple PCAs, but no PCA would accept the position
 - The PCA hired did not remain in employment because the PCA could not attain the basic knowledge to safely carry out the PCA-assigned tasks
- The consumer has planned travel within the United States, including its territories, and it would not be possible to bring multiple PCAs to provide the consumer's PCA services.
- A PCA(s) left employment suddenly
- The consumer's PCA(s) is/are temporarily unavailable for any reason, including the following:
 - The PCA is in school, or temporarily absent due to school
 - Winter or Summer break
 - Medical or family leave (sick, maternity, or paternity leave)
 - The PCA is going on vacation
- The consumer is receiving Hospice care
- The consumer has a temporary medical need to schedule their PCA to work additional approved PA hours, including post-acute hospitalization **OR** post-Skilled Nursing Facility

What Types of Overtime Authorizations Are Available? (cont.)

Continuity of Care Authorizations

- The Consumer needs time to hire additional PCAs (consumers must show supporting documentation that they are actively recruiting PCAs, including job postings, responses, etc.)
- The consumer receives Hospice Care
- The consumer has a medical need that requires intensive ADL care and needs to schedule the PCA to work additional approved PA hours. This also includes post-acute hospitalization OR post-Skilled Nursing Facility

Feedback Reminders

- Feedback will be prioritized in the following order:
 1. A MassHealth representative will read any comments submitted to the comments section.
 2. A MassHealth representative will call on anyone using the “raise hand” feature.
 3. Attendees will have the opportunity to unmute and provide feedback.
- MassHealth **will** respond to feedback. Please use the “raise hand” feature and wait for a MassHealth representative to call your name. Please identify your role as a stakeholder before sharing your comment or question.

Thank you!

Additional feedback can be submitted to MassHealth by emailing:

PCAfeedback@mass.gov