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It's Time to End Substandard Working Conditions in Home Care, published on September 6, 2021 in *Gotham Gazette*

2021年9月6日《哥譚公報》(Gotham Gazette)發表，是時候結束家庭護理中不合標準的工作條件了

The rapidly aging population in the United States, combined with the global pandemic, has brought the issue of home care to national headlines. As evidenced by President Biden's proposal of a standalone [\\$1.8 trillion](#) bill dedicated to caregiving, it's clear the government is looking to address challenges in long-term care, especially as the sector faces one of its most urgent [labor shortages](#) ever. Against the backdrop of Labor Day – a time to celebrate workers and recognize the importance of unions in fighting for better working conditions – there is no better time to reform our home care system for workers and, ultimately, patients.

隨著美國人口的迅速老齡化，加上全球疫情的盛行，家庭護理問題被送上了全國的新聞頭條。正如拜登總統提出的一項單獨的專門用於護理的 [1.8 萬億美元](#) 法案所證明的那樣，政府顯然正在尋求解決長期護理方面挑戰的方案，尤其是在該行業面臨有史以來最緊迫的 [勞動力短缺](#) 的情況下。正值勞工節，一個用來慶祝工人和表彰工會為爭取更好工作條件而努力的重要時刻，也是為工人並最終為病患們改革家庭護理系統的最佳時機。

Today, more than [800,000 individuals remain](#) on the Medicaid waiting list for home care, a number that is only expected to increase in the future. Just consider seven out of 10 of us will need long-term care at some point in our lives. Yet, despite these increases, home care wages have steadily decreased over the last decade. In 2006, home care workers earned approximately 150% of the state minimum wage on average. Today, the same caregivers receive the minimum wage or slightly above. More than [one in seven](#) low-wage workers in New York City is a home care worker. One in four workers live below the federal poverty line, and more than half rely on some form of public assistance to make ends meet. These low wages have led to chronic staffing shortages in the industry ([17%](#) of home care positions were left unfilled between 2018-2019) and a projected overall workforce shortage crisis of 83,000 workers by 2025.

在今天，超過 [800,000 人](#) 仍在醫療補助(Medicaid)的家庭護理等候名單上，而這個數字預計在未來只會增加。試想一下，我們當中有十分之七的人會在我們生命中的某個時刻需要長期護理。然而，儘管這些需求在增長，家庭護理的工資反而卻在過去十年中穩步下降。2006 年，家庭護理人員的平均收入約為州最低工資的 150%。而今天，同樣的看護人員卻獲得最低或略高於最低水平的工資。在紐約市超過 [七分之一](#) 的低薪工人是家庭護理人員。四分之一的工人生活在聯邦貧困線以下，超過一半的工人依靠某種形式的公共援助來維持生計。這些低工資導致了此行業長期出現人員短缺（2018-2019 年間 [17%](#) 的家庭護理職位空缺），預計到 2025 年將出現總共 83,000 名工人的勞動力短缺危機。

At the root of this is a systemic devaluation of care work. Traditionally, this labor is undertaken by women, particularly women of color, and government Medicaid reimbursement rates have historically devalued these workers. Home care work is in fact highly skilled work and, as we have seen during this pandemic, often dangerous and heroic. By treating it that way and changing the system accordingly, we can make care work dignified, address the workforce shortage, create a thriving care economy and better serve patients.

究其根源是在於對護理工作的系統性蔑視。傳統來講，這項勞動一直是由女性承擔的，尤其是有色人種女性，而政府的醫療補助報銷歷來都輕視這些工人。家庭護理工作實際上是高技能的工作，正如我們在這次疫情期間看到的那樣，通常是危險和需要不畏艱難的。通過這樣的正視它並相應地進行系統改革，我們可以讓護理工作變得更有尊嚴，解決勞動力短缺問題，創造繁榮的護理行業經濟並更好地為病患服務。

In New York State specifically, the two most critical issues in the home care sector are chronic low wages and 24-hour live-in cases, where home care workers stay in patient homes for 24 hours. During this time, workers care for the patient for 13 hours, with the other 11 hours left unpaid for sleep and meals. With approximately 11,000 24-hour cases in New York alone, staffed by 33,000 home care workers, this is an issue that impacts far too many. However, for many in the home care sector, this disparity doesn't come as a surprise, as nonprofits have historically faced inadequate state compensation, unfunded mandates, and longstanding labor negotiations. In short, state law ties non-profit home care agencies to low Medicaid reimbursement rates and antiquated rules that harm both patients and workers.

就紐約州具體而言，家庭護理行業最關鍵的兩個問題是長期的低工資和 24 小時入住病例，即家庭護理人員 24 小時待在病患家中。在此期間，護工人員照顧病患 13 小時，而其餘 11 小時用於睡眠和用餐的時間則沒有薪酬。在紐約有大約 11,000 個 24 小時病例，由 33,000 名家庭護理人員供職，這顯然是一個影響太多人的問題。然而，對於家庭護理行業的許多人來說，這種差異並不令人意外，因為非營利組織歷來面臨國家補助不足、資金不足以及需要長期進行勞資談判的問題。簡而言之，州法律將非營利性家庭護理機構與低醫療補助報銷率和過時的規則聯繫在一起，損害了病患和工人的利益。

The state has continually chosen to ration care rather than allocating the required \$1 billion in Medicaid to provide better wages to workers with 24-hour shifts and higher quality care for patients. As CEO of nonprofit organizations that care for 3,000 home care patients and have a 56-year legacy of providing educational, social, and community services for Asian American and immigrant New Yorkers, I understand the impact these outdated policies have on workers, patients, and families alike.

紐約州一直選擇定量護理，而不是分發所需的 10 億美元醫療補助，以向 24 小時輪班的工人提供更好的工資，從而為病患提供更高質量的護理。我們的組織看護了 3,000 名家庭護理患者並擁有 56 年為亞裔美國人和紐約移民提供教育、社會和社區服務的經驗，作為該非營利組織的首席執行官，我理解這些過時的政策對工人、病患和家庭等的重要影響。

I'm often left wondering: Why did lawmakers create a system that restricts equal pay for equal work? Labor Day is meant to commemorate the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of this country – and yet, many of those who care for others are not being cared for by our government.

我經常在想：為什麼立法者要建立一個限制同工同酬的製度？勞工節旨在紀念工人為這個國家的國力、繁榮和安康所做的貢獻。然而，許多照顧他人的人卻沒有得到我們政府的關照。

With the Biden Administration's long-term vision for home care reform already paving the way for [new bills](#) on this issue, we as a community must seize this momentum and end 24-hour shifts. To do so, the New York state government must first create a system by which home care workers receive full compensation for every hour at a patient's home on call for needed assistance, which starts by transitioning away from 24-hour shifts in favor of two 12-hour split shifts. However, no single entity can make this change alone.

拜登政府對家庭護理改革的長期願景已經為這個問題的[新法案](#)鋪平了道路，我們作為一個社區團體必須把握住形勢結束 24 小時輪班制。為此，紐約州政府必須首先建立一個系統，讓家庭護理人員在需要幫助的病人家中工作的每小時得到全額薪酬，而這則要先從將 24 小時輪班過渡到兩個 12 小時分班開始。但無論如何，沒有任何一個實體可以單獨做出這種改變。

Together, we can put enough pressure on officials in Albany to pass one bill -- A3145, sponsored by Assemblymember Harvey Epstein -- that would end 24-hour shifts in favor of two 12-hour split shifts, as well as another, Fair Pay for Home Care -- S5374/A6329, sponsored by Senator Rachel May and Assemblymember Dick Gottfried -- to raise home care worker pay to 150% of the highest area minimum wage across the state. Both pieces of legislation would allow for long-term investments in home care workers, so they can provide the best care possible for patients, such as new training structures, restructured certification, mentor programs, and more.

團結起來，我們就可以向奧爾巴尼(Albany)的官員施加足夠的壓力，來通過一項由議員 Harvey Epstein 發起倡導的法案 A3145，該法案將結束 24 小時輪班制，轉而支持兩個 12 小時的分班輪班制，以及另一項由參議員 Rachel May 和議員 Dick Gottfried 倡導的家庭護理公平薪酬法案 S5374/A6329，此法案將把家庭護理工作者的工資提高到全州最高水平的區域最低工資的 150%。這兩項立法將允許對家庭護理人員本身的投入，例如新的培訓結構、重組認證、導師項目等也使得他們可以為病患盡可能提供最好的服務和護理。

If the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us anything, it's the critical role healthcare professionals provide during times of significant need. For many years, these essential skilled workers have devoted their time and energy to supporting an increasingly aging population. This Labor Day, it's time for us all to support them and advocate for meaningful, systemic change to build a more just and caring economy.

如果 COVID-19 疫情告訴了我們什麼，那就是醫療保健專業人員在重要關頭發揮的關鍵作用。多年來，這些有熟練技能的人員將他們的時間和精力投入到支持幫助日益老齡化的人口中。這個勞工節，是時候讓我們所有人支持他們並倡導有意義的系統性變革，以建立一個更加公正和關懷的經濟。

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