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## **Personal Assistant Services (PAS) Advocacy Issues 2003: Don't Sit This One Out!**

**FACT:** PAS is one of three critical issues for people with disabilities who want to live in the community. The others are accessible, affordable, integrated housing and accessible, available transportation.

**FACT:** Community Care PAS is a growing need. Texas and the rest of the country are in a paradigm shift, as more people with disabilities are staying at or returning home from institutions. Texas also has an aging population which is increasing demand

**FACT:** There is a PAS crisis. Due to poor pay and lack of benefits, the pool of workers is inadequate.

**FACT:** The State of Texas is facing a budget shortfall. Through Medicaid programs, the State of Texas pays for PAS. To save money, other states have decreased the PAS hours allowed for individuals on Medicaid.

**FACT:** The PAS crisis can be addressed by the Texas Legislature. Legislators can authorize an increase in wages or not. They can maintain client hours or not.

### **What You Should Do:**

The time period before the Texas Legislature convenes on January 14 is an excellent time to lay the groundwork for effective advocacy. Make an appointment with the local office of your state representative and state senator and meet your elected officials and the key staff people. Let them know how important this issue is. Keep in mind that you are performing a valuable service for your legislators because there are a very large number of issues that come before the Legislature and legislators cannot possibly be knowledgeable in all. Don't bug these folks, but do maintain contact. By building a relationship, you can become your legislators' "go-to" person on disability issues.

**Above all, don't sit this one out, be a participant!**

- Increase PAS wages to \$8 an hour with benefits (DHS budget)
  - Current wage rate of \$6 - \$7 without benefits is driving a shortage of attendant care
  - Entry-level jobs in the fast food industry have better pay and benefits
  - As more people remain in or move into the community, demand for PAS is increasing

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CTD is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations working together to eliminate barriers to equal and full participation in life. CTD is funded in part by the Texas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities, the SBC Foundation, members and contributors.