

Major Research Paper

Personal Support Worker Working Conditions and Transportation Issues Impacting Quality Care

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Abstract: *Transportation reimbursement for personal support workers (PSWs) in the home care field, was determined to be of singular importance after analyzing PSWs negative working conditions, their transportation issues, the impact such issues have on clients, and the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. Potential policies for improvement to home care delivery were outlined, in the hope that transportation reimbursement can become the reality for all PSWs working in the home care field.*

Introduction and Background

They “take care of our elderly and vulnerable, so why aren’t we taking care of them?” (Stewart, 2013). Large amounts of research focus on how to address the increasing number of older adults receiving care in our society, including home based care, but little attention is paid to the working conditions home care caregivers face. Caregivers have family responsibilities, are generally female immigrants, earn a low income, and work extremely long hours to afford to get to and from work (Akjiratikarl, Yenradee, & Drake, 2007; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Lilly, 2008; Penfold, 2011; Stewart, 2013) Many caregivers are personal support workers (PSWs); who work with older adults, assist with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, toileting, taking medications and eating, while providing both physical and emotional support (Aronson & Neysmith, 1996; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Lilly, 2008; Stewart, 2013). These workers can be found in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and nursing homes, however, a large number of PSWs work directly in the homes of their clients (Kelegan, 2014; Lilly, 2008). Approximately 34,000 PSWs work in the homecare field, and are required to finance their transportation to and from each client’s home (Kelegan, 2014; Lilly, 2008). They often use multiple forms of transportation when visiting clients, and visit a large number of clients within one day (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2014; Kelegan, 2014; Postmedia Network, 2016). Additionally, they are subject to working inconsistent hours that impact their

income (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2014; Kelegan, 2014; Postmedia Network, 2016).

With a growing emphasis on delivering care in older people's homes and to relieve pressure on institutional care, there is need to examine the working conditions of PSWs that provide in-home care. When visiting client homes, transportation is a significant issue, and the most common modes of transportation PSWs use are personal cars and public transit (Independent, 2014; Waller, 2005). However, PSWs earn a low wage, making the cost of transportation difficult to manage. Low income affects how much a worker can spend on personal living expenses, such as food, health services, and housing (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2014; Kelegan, 2014; Postmedia Network, 2016). Having a limited income, and using a large portion of their wage on transportation costs, may increase levels of PSW stress, in turn affecting the care they administer to clients (Shamian, O'Brien- Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis & Kerr, 2003). Therefore, it may be beneficial to reimburse PSWs for transportation costs, in the hope that level and quality of care they administer will be maintained or improved.

Throughout this paper, the topic of reimbursing PSWs for transportation costs will be argued. However, additional questions will be explored and discussed in detail, and possible solutions will be outlined. This paper will address work-related issues surrounding transportation for PSWs, and will argue for the need of transportation reimbursement. First, the paper will outline various issues related to PSW working conditions, such as; wages, precarity, stress, health, benefits, workplace time management, and affects on workers and employers, to determine how they impact the care a PSW administers. Secondly, the major transportation problems PSWs face will be analyzed. Next, the paper will outline ways that clients are affected by PSW working conditions. An analysis of other issues related to transportation reimbursement

from the perspective of employers, advocacy groups, government regulators, and funders in the home care field will follow. Lastly, potential strategies or policies that could lead to improvement will be described.

Methodology

In order to collect as much relevant information as possible on this subject, I use material collected from academic literature, grey literature, and government documents. Academic journal articles from the healthcare field, social sciences, and health science disciplines have been reviewed to evaluate the issues PSWs face with transportation, the effects this has on clients, how funders, employers, and the government play a role, and what potential solutions would effectively relieve the problem. Grey literature from various newspapers and websites were explored to determine what information is being communicated outside of an academic setting, and if the information being shared is similar to findings from scholarly sources. Grey literature has the most information on this particular subject, indicating that more academic works need to be completed. Additionally, websites and online documents from various advocacy groups were reviewed in order to better understand the issues within the home care field, if there are specific organizations that focus on transportation, what changes PSWs want, and how advocacy groups are attempting to make such changes.

Government documents were also analyzed when researching this topic in order to determine if any policies, regulations, or guidelines have been created. Additionally, governmental documents were used to detect if problems surrounding PSWs and transportation in the home care field have been acknowledged by government officials, and if any future plans are in place.

Using multiple forms of literature, and looking at the perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the subject, has permitted a more in-depth understanding of the topic. Additionally, using multiple viewpoints has generated ideas for potentially effective solutions, that would meaningfully impact all the parties involved.

Literature Review

When analyzing and reviewing databases surrounding this subject, three main forms of literature were identified; academic literature, grey literature, and governmental or organizational documents. After reviewing all data, ten main themes were identified. These are; wages; precarious employment; stress; health; healthcare benefits; transportation and work time management; transportation issues; clients and quality of care; stakeholder perspectives; and potential improvements to home care delivery. Each theme is discussed in greater detail throughout the paper.

Discussion and Findings

All ten themes above will be discussed, however negative working conditions, transportation issues, impacts on clients and quality of care, and other stakeholder perspectives will be outlined in more detail. These sections will provide necessary information to aid in the argument that personal support workers in the home care field are struggling, and would benefit from transportation reimbursement.

Negative Working Conditions

Many personal support workers encounter issues in the workplace, in terms of receiving low wages, not having benefits, and working inconsistent hours. A great amount of research can be found on these issues, from a variety of sources.

The majority of PSWs in Canada make slightly more than minimum wage, earning anywhere from \$12.10- \$15 per hour depending on number of years in the field, the employer, and province they work in (Kelegan, 2014; Lilly, 2008; Seto, 2013). Workers in Maine make approximately \$9.05 per hour, and the majority of workers in both Canada and the U.S.A do not receive benefits (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014; Kelegan, 2014; Nugent, 2007). Nugent's (2007) work outlines the various improvements personal support workers wish to see within their workplace. These include; higher wages, benefits, concrete work schedules, and travel reimbursement. Transportation costs for many workers are so high that many PSWs are unable to afford basic living expenses (Nugent, 2007). Nugent (2007) shared personal accounts from workers who stated they spent the majority of their pay on transportation costs. Other authors highlight similar issues, share personal stories from PSW's, and argue that not reimbursing workers for transportation has a great impact on their livelihood and job satisfaction (Independent, 2014, Kelegan, 2014).

Similarly, much literature can be found on workplace satisfaction and turnover rates (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014; Chou & Robert, 2008; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008). A number of factors impact satisfaction in the workplace, and wages, benefits, training and scheduling have been found to be most important (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008). Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley (2014) found different additional factors to be important, stating that risk of injury, lack of management supervision, and emotional stress increase dissatisfaction in a PSW career. These authors also outline that rates of turnover are high in the home care field, as workers are exposed to risks, and injury (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014). Research indicates that older workers are more likely to stay working in the field, and are proud of their careers, compared to younger workers

(Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014). The authors suggested that younger workers may be more likely to leave due to having less supervision from management, low wages, lack of benefits, and inconsistent hours (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014).

Although education is important for many workers and employers, Chou and Robert (2008) found that education does not influence one's satisfaction in the workplace. Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashely (2014) argue that employers should make PSW work as appealing as possible, so that more individuals will enter and stay in the field.

Wages

A number of authors describe how PSWs need to make a higher wage, and that standards must be put in place to ensure wage increases occur (Lilly, 2008; Stewart, 2013). Stewart (2013) states that Ontario needs to create a wage standard, as PSWs in a hospital setting make higher wages than those who work in home care. Each PSW completes the same work, and should receive the same pay. Additionally, those in home care, have the task of travelling to and from multiple homes, indicating that perhaps they should receive a slightly higher wage than those within a hospital.

Precarious Employment

Individuals who suffer from precarious employment hold jobs that are inconsistent, make minimum wage, rarely receive benefits, and can have abrupt scheduling changes (Lewchuk, et al., 2013). Precarious employees also often hold more than one job at a time, in order to make enough to afford basic living expenses (Lewchuk, et al., 2013). Many personal support workers classify as precarious workers as they rarely make more than minimum wage,

often work more than one job, are unlikely to receive benefits, have unexpected work schedules that can change without notice, have differing work hours each week, and are usually not members of a union (Lewchuk, et al., 2013). Precarious workers often report feeling less connected to their communities, as a lack of income decreased socialization, and inconsistent work hours left little time to participate in community events (Lewchuk et al., 2013). Precarious employment affects a worker's household well-being, as a low income impacts one's social and familial relationships (Lewchuk et al. 2013). Relationships are affected based on the workers anxiety surrounding inconsistent employment and finances (Lewchuk et al, 2013). Additionally, the children of precarious workers are affected as their parent may be unable to afford food, schooling, and child care, which impacts health, education and well-being (Lewchuk et al., 2013). Feeling less connected to one's community, poor relationships, and being unable to afford costs for a child all affect a precarious worker's stress level (Lewchuk et al., 2013). PSWs can be considered precarious workers, based on their working conditions, indicating that they may experience a decreased connection to their community, poor familial relationships, and an increase in stress levels.

Stress

When a personal support worker has to worry about affording transportation for their career, many aspects of their lives are impacted (Kelegan, 2014, Lilly, 2008). Additionally, those they care for are also affected, resulting in a vicious cycle of negative affects on both parties (Kirsch, 2013; Stewart, 2013). One of the biggest struggles PSW's face that affect their clients is their level of stress (Shamian, O'Brien- Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis & Kerr, 2003). PSWs in the home care field have to visit a large number of clients each day, and having to organize how to pay for transportation to those clients increases stress levels (Shamian, O'Brien- Pallas,

Thomson, Alksnis & Kerr, 2003). PSWs often have so many clients in one day, that they are forced to work long hours, often overtime, and do not receive adequate compensation (Akjiratikarl, Yenradee, & Drake, 2007; Lilly, 2008; Penfold, 2011). A PSW outlined that in order to afford transportation to client homes, she would have to work a long number of hours (Independent, 2014). Additionally, the worker shared that any travel for a client, during their scheduled time with the worker, was also unpaid, resulting in the PSW using their own limited finances for client's personal needs (Independent, 2014). Similarly, an article by Kelegan (2014) outlined the life of a PSW, who shared that earning a low working wage impacted living conditions. Having a heavy workload, as well as having to worry about finances, is clearly a large stressor for these workers.

PSWs work is often unreliable and hours are inconsistent, leading to increased levels of stress (Kelegan, 2014, Postmedia Network, 2016). Lewchuk, et al. (2013) defines this type of work as precarious, and explains that precarious work is increasing in Ontario, particularly in the greater Toronto area. One PSW outlined that 21 hours per week is considered full-time at her agency, and many of her co-workers receive much less (Kelegan, 2014). Work hours are spread out throughout the day, making it difficult for workers to have other part-time jobs when they are not with clients (Kelegan, 2014; Postmedia Network, 2016). Therefore, many workers struggle to make enough money to live on, and must also worry about saving enough money to travel for work.

Other stressors that impact PSWs result from unrealistic job expectations, job dissatisfaction, and from completing a large number of physical tasks for clients each day (Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, and Bagakas (2008), discuss the various factors that impact PSW job dissatisfaction and turnover

rates. The authors found that low wages, financial strain, lack of training, benefits and healthcare, as well as scheduling conflicts, are huge predictors of dissatisfaction, and that workers become emotionally strained, impacting how satisfied they are at work, and how they care for clients (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008). Although emotional strain can impact PSWs, physical strain from working with too many clients, and completing laborious tasks increases a worker's chance of developing workplace injuries, which may induce high levels of stress and absenteeism (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). When a worker becomes injured on the job, levels of absenteeism increase (Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). Absenteeism and workplace injuries, put uninjured PSWs in high demand, causing them to take on additional workplace roles (Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). Excess roles may cause uninjured workers to develop stress, and possibly, over time, a workplace injury (Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). There appears to be a continuous cycle where a worker becomes injured, healthy workers take over, but due to increased workloads, they also quickly develop illnesses and injuries. In addition to injuries at work, PSWs often suffer from health-related problems that affect how they care for clients.

Health

There is a fair amount of current research surrounding the health of PSWs. Some research focuses on PSWs perception of self. Wilkinson, Shippee, and Ferraro (2012) state that occupational travel does not have a large impact on women's health, however, their subjective evaluations of self are more severe as they compare themselves to others in the same role. Therefore, if a PSW is travelling often for work, they may compare themselves to others in the

same role, and feel inadequate, which will affect how confident they are when providing care to clients.

A number of authors agree that PSWs become emotionally drained, suffer from high levels of stress, and have increased rates of becoming injured due to their daily workplace tasks (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, and Bagakas, 2008; Karantzas, Mellor, McCabe, Davison and Beaton, 2012; Shamain, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). Many workers in this profession are at an increased risk of musculoskeletal injuries from doing a large number of tasks in a short time period, leading to increased absenteeism (Shamain, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). Seto's (2013) work outlines that PSWs work with unwell individuals regularly and are unable to take sick days. Additionally, many PSWs have such busy schedules that they are unable to eat sufficient meals (Independent, 2014). Being unable to eat properly, or take sick days increases a worker's chance of developing illness or injury, and increases the likelihood of a worker spreading illnesses to their clients.

Being healthy is especially important for those who care for others. A number of factors impact the health of PSWs, which results in inadequate care for clients (Kelegan, 2014). The nature of PSW workplace tasks and the number of individuals they work with puts them at increased risk of ill health (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). If a PSW is required to visit a large number of clients each day, and work long unpaid hours, they are likely to develop fatigue, which results in reduced alertness, and an increased chance of developing a workplace injury, or injuring a client (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Independent, 2014). An article written by the *Independent* (2014), a news site from the United Kingdom (UK), describes a PSW who started her day at

7am, and did not leave her last client's home until 10:40pm that evening. This worker mentioned several days where she would leave early, and arrive home late in the evenings from falling behind schedule, due to a heavy workload (Independent, 2014). The worker also mentioned feeling tired, even after a full night's rest, which likely affected her health and the quality of care she administered (Independent, 2014). Although this example is from the UK, it provides excellent insight into the work and struggles that PSWs face, which is similar, if not the same, in Canada.

Another factor that impacts a PSW's health is low wages. As previously mentioned, PSWs earn a low income, and have difficulty affording costs of living (Akjiratikarl, Yenradee, & Drake, 2007; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Lilly, 2008; Penfold, 2011; Stewart, 2013). Without adequate funds that can be spent on housing and food, a PSW's health is likely to decline. Specifically, being unable to afford nutritious food may result in a worker getting sick, possibly passing the illness to clients, and being unable to attend work (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, Macfarlane, & Campbell, 2013; Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). One worker shared that she was regularly unable to eat lunch or dinner, and that her meals generally consisted of something she could eat quickly while driving to and from client homes (Independent, 2014). The worker stated many times that she had not eaten on days when she had multiple clients (Independent, 2014). The PSW also shared that some days she was offered some tea and biscuits with clients, and knew that this snack might be all she ate throughout the day (Independent, 2014). Clearly, only eating snacks that are not nutritious impacts a PSW's energy level and inhibits their ability to work effectively.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Labour (2010) all employees who work more than five hours straight must be given a thirty-minute break, free from all work duties, to eat.

Employers and employees may alter the thirty-minute break into two fifteen-minute breaks either verbally or in writing, and employers are not required to pay workers during such break times (Ministry of Labour, 2010). However, if a worker must stay at work during their break, they should receive payment (Ministry of Labour, 2010). PSWs in the home care field have to travel to multiple homes throughout the day, and therefore are not in one location to receive a break. It becomes difficult to determine if travelling between client homes is considered a break, as workers are not with clients. However, the Ministry of Labour (2012) outlines that any travel that is required to perform work is considered work time, and employees must be given a break. Although this is the law, many PSWs are given heavy schedules that do not allow them to take breaks (Independent, 2014; Nugent, 2007). If they do take a break, they risk being late for clients and working additional hours that may not be paid (Independent, 2014).

Another PSW shared that she would purchase food for one of her clients who did not have a suitable pension (Kelegan, 2014). This worker enjoyed helping all of her clients, however, spending personal money on a client certainly impacts how much the worker can spend on themselves to stay healthy. Although this is the worker's decision, she should be able to care for her clients without worrying about her own income or personal finances.

Healthcare Benefits

Personal support workers, who can be employed by for-profit, not-for-profit, or private organizations, do not receive a variety of benefits, if not unionized (Government of Ontario: Home and Community Care, 2014; Government of Ontario: Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, 2015; Grant & Church, 2015a). Most PSWs in the home care field are not unionized, so do not receive healthcare benefits, or time off for illnesses (Butler, Brennon-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashely, 2014; Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2014; Kelegan, 2014; Postmedia Network,

2016; Seto, 2013; Waller, 2005). Therefore, workers have to pay for any type of prescription medicines or uninsured health services they need when they become ill. They also have to decide whether to lose pay for the few days they are ill or go to work feeling unwell (Seto, 2013). Because of this, many workers chose to attend work, which puts their clients at risk, and may impair their own health (Independent, 2014). One PSW profiled in an online article, who woke up one morning feeling extremely tired and unwell after working for eighteen days straight, outlined that staying home from work heavily impacted her finances (Independent, 2014). The worker expressed that she can not feel ill, as she has too much work to do, and too many clients to see (Independent, 2014). This worker decided to go to work, potentially putting her health, and the health of her clients at risk. This worker also discussed her frustration when one of her colleagues called in sick, as her day had to be extended to over fifteen hours of work, and she had to meet two workloads of clients (Independent, 2014). Perhaps PSWs feel pressure from co-workers to attend work when feeling ill, as they understand the extra workload, and do not want to burden their colleagues. Although this is each worker's individual preference, it reflects the fact that there are not enough individuals working in this field.

Seto's (2013) article written in the *Guelph Mercury*, outlined how PSWs must meet many clients over one day, many of whom are sick. PSWs are exposed to many illnesses, increasing the likelihood that they will become sick themselves, as they do not receive sick days (Seto, 2013). Therefore, some workers may provide limited care to sick clients, as they are fearful of catching an illness and being unable to recover. Additionally, if a worker does contract an illness, they are much more likely to spread it to clients if they are unable to stay home from work. Not allowing PSWs to take time off sick is senseless and dangerous, as the chances of spreading an illness or providing incomplete care is greatly increased.

Kelegan (2014) has also done work on a PSW and healthcare benefits, describing a worker who feels fortunate to receive benefits currently, but when she first began working as a personal support worker she could not afford medication for her daughter (Kelegan, 2014). This worker outlines that her daughter had a number of health difficulties, and she would have to purchase half of the prescriptions required, and go back later for the rest when she had saved enough money (Kelegan, 2014). If this worker was spending the majority of earnings on her family, she would have less money available for her own medications if she became ill. Additionally, the stress of being unable to care for one's own children would likely have an impact on stress levels, which could lead to illness.

Transportation and Work Time Management

PSW work has become rushed, and workers are forced to meet a large number of clients each day, and complete tasks quickly and efficiently (Aronson & Neysmith, 1996). However, providing care quickly, rather than effectively, decreases personalized care, and may negatively impact the clients (Aronson & Neysmith, 1996). Therefore, PSWs should be given adequate time with each client in order to provide the best care possible.

Many older adults request to see PSWs at specific times to align with timing of medications, or to receive help with certain tasks throughout the day (Ballingall, 2013; Independent, 2014). Therefore, it is important for workers to arrive at each client's home when they are expected. However, there are a number of factors that affect when a PSW arrives, which impacts the care that each client receives.

Often, a PSWs daily schedule changes when one visit with a client does not go well, or an unexpected issue arises (Independent, 2014). For example, an article in the *Independent*

(2014) outlines that many clients require more time than is allocated to them, causing workers to either rush, or arrive late to their next appointment. One worker discussed that one of her clients refused to get up to be washed, dressed, and fed (Independent, 2014). Once the client was up, washing took longer than expected and the worker had to stay an additional twenty minutes to dress the client and help them prepare breakfast (Independent, 2014). This put the worker twenty minutes behind for her next appointment (Independent, 2014). Due to being late, the worker tried to condense her time with her client in order to arrive on time for the next individual who required medicine (Independent, 2014). If this client had an unexpected issue, the worker would be late for administering medication, which could have detrimental effects on the older adult's health. Another article written by Ballingall (2013) outlines the story of an older adult who relies on a PSW to help him bathe. The article discusses that the PSW was ill, notified the client, and did not arrive at work (Ballingall, 2013). Unfortunately, the client who has cognitive deficiencies, did not recall being told (Ballingall, 2013). The client waited in his bath robe all day, as he knew someone was supposed to help him, but didn't know when (Ballingall, 2013).

Major Transportation Issues

There is a moderate amount of research surrounding transportation for personal support workers, from both academic and non-academic sources. An important document written by Sengupta, Fordham, Day, and Macfarlane (2013) outlines the benefits and barriers to public transportation, specifically in Toronto. Much of their work, although not directly linked to PSWs, does provide insight into the problems that those who rely on public transportation face regularly. Conversely, work by Waller (2005) focuses on owning a personal vehicle for work, and discusses that over time, a car may in fact be cheaper than using public transportation. Seto's (2013) work from the *Guelph Mercury*, outlines a personal experience from a PSW who

struggles to afford transportation to and from client homes. The worker expresses frustration about inadequate compensation for the number of kilometres travelled for work (Seto, 2013).

Personal support workers in the home care field have to travel to multiple clients homes each day (Kelegan, 2014; Lilly, 2008). Often, workers are not paid or reimbursed for travel time between client homes, increasing the difficulty to save for personal living expenses (Kelegan, 2014; Stewart, 2013). In order to arrive at each home, PSWs may use a number of different forms of transportation (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2014; Kelegan, 2014; Postmedia Network, 2016). Each type of transportation has different implications for workers, making it difficult to determine what type of transportation should be used on a daily basis. In order to determine the main problems PSWs face with transportation, two major types of transportation will be explored. One of the most common transportation methods used by individuals who earn a low income, such as PSWs, is public transit (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013).

Public Transit

Work completed by Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane and Campbell (2013) discusses the importance of public transit in a community. The authors explain that public transit creates an environment that is welcoming, friendly, healthy, and inclusive, as all citizens have the ability to access health services and engage in an urban lifestyle (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). Many individuals rely on public transit as their primary source of transportation, and without it, would be unable to access healthcare services, purchase food, or get to work (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). Additionally, the majority of individuals who use public transit regularly, are those who earn a low income and are

unable to afford other modes of transportation, such as a vehicle or taxi services (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013).

Although public transit is an inexpensive form of transportation, it is not perfect. First, the cost of public transit varies depending on location (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). For example, Toronto and Montreal are the most expensive places to use public transit, at \$3.25 per person, per trip (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013; Société de transport de Montréal, 2017; Toronto Transit Commission, 2017). The least expensive public transit in all of Canada is in Vancouver at \$2.75 per ride (Translink, 2017). The city of Hamilton charges \$3.00 per ride, but offers reduced prices if the individual is not paying in cash (City of Hamilton, 2017).

The second issue many face when using public transit is having to wait for buses, trains, and subways that are on schedules (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). Often, individuals who use public transit to get to work have a difficult time finding steady employment based on long wait and travel times and inadequate or poor transit routes (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). A large portion of low-income individuals are also unable to improve their employment, as higher paying jobs are farther than the transit routes, limiting the jobs they can take and how far they can travel for work (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013).

The impacts of both cost and wait times associated with public transit use have a direct impact on the working conditions of PSWs. It can impair their ability to get to and from work, to save and spend money on personal expenses, and to devote adequate time to clients (Independent 2014; Kelegan, 2014). For example, if a worker has to meet a client, and catch a bus halfway

through the visit to arrive on time for the next client, the worker may cut their visit short, or try to complete tasks quickly, possibly resulting in lower levels of care.

Kelegan's (2014) article is again useful in analyzing public transit affordability for PSW's. Although the article does not specify the workers mode of transportation, Kelegan uses an example of a PSW whose agency pays \$12.50 an hour, which is not sufficient enough to pay for transportation between client homes (Kelegan, 2014). Kelegan's work states that this wage is typical across Ontario for thousands of workers who are not members of a union (Kelegan, 2014). The interviewed PSW argues that they do not make a living wage, and changes need to be made to improve their working conditions (Kelegan, 2014). Perhaps reimbursing these workers for transportation would be a major step in improving their incomes, health, and working conditions.

Personal Vehicles

Despite their low income, many PSWs use personal cars when working in the home care field (Independent, 2014). Although a personal car avoids the challenges of public transit, PSWs using cars face other problems, such as the cost of the vehicle, and inadequate compensation for these costs. In addition, the price of gas has been increasing, and today is approximately \$1.10-\$1.20 per litre, and fluctuates regularly (CTV News, 2017). Therefore, the cost of gas for many workers may be more than what they are paid in a given day. In Ontario, the average wage of a PSW is \$12.50 per hour (Kelegan, 2014). If a worker is fortunate enough to get full time hours, approximately 40 hours per week, they would be making \$500 per week, and \$100 per day, which may not be enough to afford gas, as well as save for personal expenses.

PSWs in the home care field are not always reimbursed for travel expenses, even though they have to visit multiple clients in one day (Kelegan, 2014; Lilly, 2008; Stewart, 2013). Agencies that employ personal support workers should be reimbursing them for travel costs, however many do not (Corporate Watch, 2016; Richards, 2016). This may be due to the fact that agencies have the option of reimbursing workers for travel or can sign tax forms that allow workers to deduct work related travel expenses that have been logged with supporting documentation, i.e. gas receipts (Goodyear, 2016). Goodyear's (2016) article written for CBC News discusses that workers who must travel for work, are able to claim travel expenses as an income tax deduction. Workers are able to claim 54 cents per kilometre travelled, up to 5,000 kilometres, and then the amount decreases to 49 cents (Government of Canada, 2017). The article outlines that workers must keep a record of all expenses, and are only eligible if a worker must work away from an office, and if the worker is responsible for paying for expenses out of pocket (Goodyear, 2016). If the worker meets the criteria, employers must sign tax forms in order for the deduction to be eligible (Goodyear, 2016). PSWs meet both criteria, however, if a worker receives reimbursement per kilometre or a travel allowance from their employer, it is considered reasonable, and cannot be deducted (Goodyear, 2016; Turbo Tax, 2014). The type of arrangement a PSW has with an employer, will determine whether they receive reimbursement or can claim any personal expenses on travel. Sadly, there are very few organizations that hire PSWs that offer reimbursement to workers, and it is unclear if many PSWs are aware that they can claim these expenses (Nugent, 2007; Seto, 2013; Turbo Tax, 2014). Depending on travel time, the number of kilometres travelled, and the varying costs of gas, having to pay for transportation could be a large expense that negatively affects workers (Kelegan, 2014; Lilly, 2008).

Some personal support workers are very fortunate, and work with agencies that do reimburse them for travel expenses (Seto, 2013). A PSW working in the city of Guelph stated that she travelled over 400 kilometers per week, and that her agency paid her 34 cents per kilometre (Seto, 2013). Only one other article, by Nugent (2007) was located that discussed workers being reimbursed for transportation costs. Unfortunately, the article did not state a percentage or dollar amount that each worker received. The Government of Canada (2017) states that all workers in Ontario who travel as part of their employment, can claim 54 cents per kilometre travelled. This amount has been in place since 2011, and does not differ based on type of career (Government of Canada, 2017). Therefore, it is puzzling that the PSW in Seto's (2013) article is only paid 34 cents. As previously mentioned, if a worker receives any form of reimbursement or travel allowance, it is deemed reasonable, and they can not make any claims when completing taxes (Goodyear, 2016; Turbo Tax, 2014). If other individuals can claim up to 54 cents, how is receiving 34 cents fair? Perhaps workers who do not receive 54 cents should be able to claim the remainder when filing taxes.

The Ministry of Labour's (2012) document titled "*What Counts as Work Time?*", states that any travel, aside from arriving at the first place of work and returning home in the evening, that is necessary to perform work duties is considered work time, and employees must be paid their hourly wage for any time spent travelling. Sadly, many home care agencies do not fairly reimburse workers for travel. In the UK, a PSW had to sue their employer for unfair compensation (Richards, 2016). There is no documentation of this happening in Canada, but it raises the issue of whether or not we want a system here that forces workers to take such drastic actions. Workers should not have to sue employers, and should be fairly compensated for work related travel.

In addition to the high cost of gas and not being properly reimbursed for travel, workers have to pay for any maintenance required on their vehicle (Independent, 2014). An article written by a PSW in the *Independent* (2014), outlined that her vehicle was rarely used outside of work, and that all repair costs and insurance were her responsibility. This specific PSW wrote that she had worked fifteen days straight in order to pay for repairs to her car, as not having it would limit how much and where she could work, which would impact how much she would have for living expenses (Independent, 2014).

The cost of owning and using a personal vehicle when travelling to and from client homes, is extremely expensive, and many PSW lives and financial stability are affected. Having to spend money on a car, rather than on food, housing, and healthcare greatly impacts a PSW's personal health, which also impacts the health of clients. Therefore, correctly reimbursing workers for transportation costs would create fairness in the field, create less confusion for workers surrounding what can be deducted, ensure that all workers receive a reasonable allowance, positively impact a PSW's health, and increase job satisfaction, all resulting in exceptional care.

Also, the form of transportation being used may affect when a PSW arrives and leaves a client's home. As previously stated, individuals who earn a low income, like PSWs, are more likely to use public transit to travel for work (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). However, public transit runs on a schedule, which may cause PSWs to arrive at client homes at incorrect times, affecting client care (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). Having to catch a form of public transit may cause workers to arrive late, or force PSWs to leave a client's home early, in an effort to be on time for their next patient. This can cause rushed work, mistakes, little time with clients, and poor quality of care (Canadian

Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012; Kirsch, 2013; Seto, 2013). Using public transit may be difficult for PSWs, as time spent with clients is limited, and care may not be sufficient.

Clients and Quality of Care

A PSW's stress level, health, method of transportation, and fragmented work schedule, all have negative effects on the clients they care for. Workers are aware of their effects on clients, and in the City of Guelph, 400 workers went on strike, arguing that without the work they do, clients suffer, and other institutions and organizations become overwhelmed with additional work (Kirsch, 2013). If a PSW is stressed, or tired, their physical and emotional well-being will be low, causing the level and quality of care they administer to be poor (Shamian, O'Brien- Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis & Kerr, 2003). If a worker is unwell, and unable to take time off to recover, they are more likely to make mistakes, potentially harm their client, and pass their illness to those they care for (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Kirsch, 2013; Seto, 2013). Additionally, if a PSW is feeling unwell they may be unable to ensure tasks are done to completion, affecting the health or care given to clients (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Kirsch, 2013). When workers encounter unexpected issues with clients, their daily schedule changes, not only impacting the time they spend with each individual, but potentially endangering clients who need PSWs at a particular point throughout the day for medication, appointments, or tasks (Ballingall, 2013; Independent, 2014). Finally, the form of transportation used to visit each client may have an affect on the care clients receive, as PSWs may have to rely on a transportation schedule that does not align with their schedule for meeting clients (Sengupta, Fordham, Day, MacFarlane, & Campbell, 2013). Therefore, solutions need to be put in place to ensure that PSWs have reliable transportation, funding and benefits for healthcare

services, and time off to alleviate stress and recover when ill. Although the issue of transportation has large effects on PSWs and clients, many other factors should be considered.

Other Stakeholders

Many different issues, and stakeholder perspectives affect whether and how changes can be made to the organization of PSW work and transportation reimbursement.

Employer Perspectives

Personal support workers can be employed by both for-profit, and not-for-profit organizations, which may receive funding from different sources. For-profit organizations have the goal of earning money, and often will not receive funding from public sources (Dees & Anderson, 2003). Many organizations or agencies that are not-for-profit, are given funding by the Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-term care to use for PSW wages, as well as for other organizational expenses (Government of Ontario: Home and Community Care, 2014; Government of Ontario: Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, 2015; Grant & Church, 2015a). A PSW who works for an organization that provides home care services usually receives regular information from management regarding their daily client list and any schedule changes that have occurred (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2014; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Kelegan, 2014; Nugent, 2007). Over-work, over-booking, and inconsistent schedules occur regularly and cause stress for personal support workers, while also negatively impacting the level and quality of care that the workers can administer to clients (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014; Nugent, 2007; Seto, 2013).

The reason over-booking practices by employers affect PSWs working in the home care field is that employers do not have funding that can be allocated to increasing PSW wages,

covering transportation costs, or paying for over-time (Grant & Church, 2015a). The Ontario government had promised that the PSW minimum wage would increase by \$4, to \$16.50 per hour by April 2016 (Government of Ontario: Ministry of Finance, 2014). The government planned to increase the wage slowly over two years, however, soon realized how expensive the shift would be (Grant & Church, 2015a). The increase was to be completed in two phases, however, when phase one of the increase was implemented in 2014, the government recognized how expensive the overall cost would be, and phase two was postponed (Grant & Church, 2015a). The first phase was beneficial for workers, and although many organizations were given additional funding, they still had to cut costs in other areas in order to increase worker pay (Grant & Church, 2015a). This may indicate that organizations were not given adequate funding to cover wage increases, as well as the regular costs necessary for operation. Postponed funding regarding the wage increase was confusing and frustrating for many PSWs, leading them to have reduced trust in their employers and the government (Grant & Church, 2015a).

Employers were put into a difficult situation, surrounding the attempt to increase wages, as it impacted how much their organization could spend on other services, expenses, and growth. The Ontario Community Support Association (2016) outlined that the main priorities employers face when given funding is to increase wages, invest in technological advancements (IT), and increase funding for administration and operation changes (Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). The additional funding that was provided during phase one of the wage increase, actually increased budgeting pressure, making it more difficult for employers to decide where to allocate funds (The Ontario Community Support Association, 2016).

Many employers are also unable to afford to give workers benefits, sick days, or healthcare services, due to limited funding (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Bouchard,

2015). Not providing such benefits impacts the health of a worker, which lowers productivity, and causes employers to overbook other staff members.

Employers must find a way to entice new, young individuals into the home care field, as demand for these workers is growing (Grant & Church, 2015b). Providing better pay, transportation reimbursement, and benefits will act as an incentive, and perhaps make the home care field more appealing (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014). With more workers in the field, the necessity for employers to overbook PSWs might be reduced, allowing them to provide more effective care to clients. It is unlikely that new workers will enter the PSW profession, unless the field receives better wages and working conditions. Hopefully these changes occur soon, so Canada is prepared for the increasing number of aging baby boomers.

Government

In Canada, the general public expects the government to be responsible for providing effective healthcare services. More specifically, the mandate of the Ontario Ministry of Long-term Care (2017) is to “work to establish a patient-centred, results driven, integrated and sustainable publicly funded health system, by helping people stay healthy, delivering good care when people need it, and protecting the health system for the future” (About the Ministry, para. 1). Government is often responsible for allocating funding for different programs or organizations that serve society on a large-scale. The Ontario government has realized that as the baby boomer population ages, more older adults will be aging in their homes, and that home care services need to be improved (Hoskins, 2015, Hoskins, 2016). Therefore, the Ontario government announced that they would be increasing the PSW minimum wage by \$4, to \$16.50 per hour (Ministry of Finance, 2014; Online Personal Support Resource Centre, n.d; Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). The announcement was originally made in 2014, and

stated that the full \$4 increase would be done by April of 2016 (Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2014; Ministry of Finance, 2014). Sadly, the increase was halted after the first phase based on high costs, and currently, there does not appear to be any information outlining that the increase has occurred (Grant & Church, 2015a). In addition, the Ontario government outlined that they would also develop new ways to ensure that PSWs were working full time, create new job orientation programs for recent PSW graduates, increase retention and recruitment rates for the field, and create more leadership roles in the workplace for PSWs (Ministry of Finance, 2014). However, they do not state how they will do this, whether funding is needed, and if so, where the funding will come from.

The Ontario Minister of Finance and Legislative Assembly recently created a document titled the *“Patients First Roadmap”*, which summarizes various initiatives that should be executed to ensure excellence in home care (Hoskins, 2015). A major initiative focuses on accessibility to services, and states that home care funding will increase (Hoskins, 2015). Although this initiative outlines a funding increase, the document does not explain where funding will come from, or where it will be distributed. Additionally, the Minister clearly feels that home care is important, and plans to make changes in this area, however, will any of these changes affect the workers in this field, or just the recipients of care? Both groups need changes, and neither group should be ignored. Unfortunately, it seems that the workers are being ignored, and no changes have been created for them. Bill 41, the *“Patients First Act”*, highlights that when patients are put first, and person-centred care increases, PSW careers are affected in both positive and negative ways (Hoskins, 2016). Individualized care causes work to become more complex with unchanging wages, however, workers are able to build stronger relationships with clients (Hoskins, 2016). Although this new bill was passed in 2016, there have not been any new

policies or programs that focus on PSWs or funding. Perhaps the government does not feel that worker issues are of main concern, and would rather put funding towards other programs or policies.

PSW wages in Ontario are the lowest out of all Canadian provinces (Ontario Personal Support Resource Centre, n.d.). The 2016 Ontario budget indicated that it would dedicate \$250 million per year to community services, that was to be used for the wage increase (Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). However, the agencies receiving this funding deemed the \$250 million as insufficient for the wage increase, in light of their other operational factors (Ontario Community Support Association, 2016).

In terms of funding, there are some non-government programs or organizations that will give funding to employers, however, funding can only be used for specific purposes (Meals on Wheels, 2017). For example, the Meals on Wheels (2017) organization in London, Ontario, has a program where employers can register for funding from the province, for PSWs to enhance their education or become certified. Although adequate and certified education is important, funding should also be used in other areas so PSWs can earn a reasonable wage or receive travel reimbursement. Only offering funding for specific purposes outlines that there is an assumption that the government, as well as funders, only view certain aspects of home and community care as important. Therefore, some components that are important for the livelihood of workers and those they care for are never addressed.

Advocacy Groups

Many advocacy groups that support personal support workers believe that transportation reimbursement is not only necessary, but possible (Canadian Union of Public Employees &

Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012; Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). The Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (2012), asserts that quality health care in Ontario will occur when workers are given adequate wages, benefits, and pay for transportation costs. They argue that when workers are treated well, clients will also be well treated, and retention rates for the job will increase (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012). The Canadian Union of Public Employees (2014), wrote a letter to the Ontario Minister outlining and arguing that PSWs deserve higher wages, and reimbursement for transportation and benefits. Although such groups have attempted to present this issue to members of the government, no change occurred.

Additional research surrounding the government and funding can be identified through advocacy groups, who focus on providing PSWs with more education and regulated training (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012; Health Professionals Regulatory Advisory Council, 2005). The Minister of Long-term Care believes that education standards would allow workers to become regulated with the Health Professionals Regulatory Advisory Council (Health Professionals Regulatory Advisory Council, 2005). However, the Advisory Council disagrees, and believes that instead of mandatory education, workers should be better trained on the job so they are prepared for their new careers (Health Professionals Regulatory Advisory Council, 2005). The National Association of Certified Caregiver Personal Support Workers (NACPSW), states that workers have an interest in being regulated, and want to complete specific tasks like other regulated workers (Health Professionals Regulatory Advisory Council, 2005). Although education is important, only administering regulated training would still benefit workers, increasing the professions chances of receiving higher wages (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions,

2012). The workers would be viewed as more qualified, legitimizing the wage increase (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012). Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia currently have education standards in place, and a group is planning to create a national education program that will improve working conditions for workers, resulting in the administration of better care for clients (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012).

Advocacy groups attempt to assist personal support workers, and wish to create better working conditions for them. PSWs are not always appreciated in their workplaces, and are considered to work in a precarious field (Grant & Church, 2015a; Shamian, O'Brien-Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis, & Kerr, 2003). Therefore, when problems arise, PSWs may not bring concerns forward, and if they do their voices are not always heard, resulting in a lack of resolution, increased rates of turnover, and workers accepting poor treatment and conditions (Aronson & Neysmith, 1996; Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014; Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012). If PSWs were viewed in roles of leadership, and opinions were valued, perhaps issues surrounding wage and travel reimbursement would no longer exist (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashely, 2014; Kelegan, 2014).

For PSWs struggling with a workplace issue in home care, it is not always easy to speak to other co-workers, as all workers have heavy workloads, are not all working in the same location, and are not provided scheduled time to talk (Kontos, Miller, & Mitchell, 2009). Nurses are given scheduled times to talk to one another about patients and problems that arise, and personal support workers should not be treated differently (Kontos, Miller, & Mitchell, 2009). Therefore, if a PSW is experiencing any difficulties on the job, or is experiencing transportation

problems, they are unable to discuss the problem with others. Sadly, if only one worker comes forward about the problem, it is unlikely that something will be done. Even if many workers come forward, there is no guarantee that problems will be resolved as PSW voices and opinions are not always valued (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014).

Therefore, it is important to understand and listen to PSW needs, in order to ensure that workers are healthy and can travel effectively for work. Although advocacy groups attempt to make this a reality, new policies or programs would likely be more effective. Such policies should be implemented that address PSW transportation issues.

Improvements to Home Care Delivery

Clearly, the above discussion has highlighted a number of issues surrounding home care, and ways that the system could be improved. My focus is specifically dealing with recommendations on the transportation reimbursement issue. However, there are a variety of factors that must be explored when attempting to devise possible solutions.

Existing Policies

When attempting to alleviate an issue that affects a large number of people, a new policy is often put into place. In the case of transportation costs affecting PSWs, the policy area that must be focused on is in provincial healthcare funding. In order for a policy to be created, governments usually examine existing policies, policy legacies, to determine how effective they are and if a new policy should be implemented (National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy, 2014).

Although limited, there are examples of reimbursement that could be useful for Canadian jurisdictions to explore, and possibly adopt (Nugent, 2007; Seto, 2013). Seto (2013) outlines that

in the city of Guelph, some workers receive 34 cents for every kilometre they travel. However, one worker states that this rate does not cover the majority of her expenses (Seto, 2013). In Canada, workers can claim 54 cents per kilometre as a tax deduction for workplace travel (Government of Canada, 2017). This allowance should be more widely publicized in the PSW community, so more workers can take advantage of the deduction. In New Brunswick, Nugent (2007) outlines that a large number of PSWs express that they need transportation and travel reimbursement, and some workers even state that a company car would alleviate transportation issues. However, many workers in New Brunswick receive some reimbursement for use of their personal cars (Nugent, 2007). Although an exact or consistent reimbursement amount was unmentioned, one worker reported that they spent \$1,300 on car maintenance and gas, and only received \$200 in return (Nugent, 2007). They expressed that this had impacted them and their finances for personal living expenses (Nugent, 2007).

In Maine, a new bill was explored in 2015 that increased a PSW's wage from \$9 to \$15, and added new benefits, as well as transportation reimbursement (Bouchard, 2015). Approximately 85% of the new increase would go to providing workers with health benefits and reimbursement for transportation and travel costs (Bouchard, 2015). Although the public would be paying \$9 million collectively in taxes, a large number of workers would be positively affected (Bouchard, 2015). Canadian provinces and jurisdictions should study this example and determine its effectiveness or financial viability, to consider making similar changes.

Ontario also attempted to increase the PSW minimum wage to \$16.50 per hour by April 1, 2016 (Ministry of Finance, 2014; Online Personal Support Resource Centre, n.d.; Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). However, the increase had more than one phase, and

the second phase was not completed (Grant & Church, 2015a). Currently, there is no evidence that the increase has occurred, questioning how seriously the government is handling the issue.

Potential Policies

I argue that the single most important policy change that would begin to address the poor working conditions of PSWs in a positive way, would be a standardized form of transportation reimbursement. In an attempt to create a standard reimbursement policy, a variety of recommendations can be explored. Due to the fact that there are no current policies in place in this area, these recommendations would require professional assistance to be effectively implemented. A possible policy would be a mandate that employers provide reimbursement to workers with each paycheque. This reimbursement would be in addition to their wage. The second possibility would be for PSWs to receive one large sum from employers at the beginning of each work year, that would be put towards transportation fees. The third avenue to examine would be for clients to pay an additional fee when hiring PSWs, that would be allocated for the PSWs travel to and from the client's home. The fourth idea would be for PSWs to keep a journal outlining how far they travel each day, what form of transportation they used, and how much they spent. This journal could be reviewed either on a weekly or monthly basis to determine how much each worker is reimbursed. A fifth possibility would be for employers to provide PSWs with yearly or monthly bus passes that they can use for travelling between client homes. Lastly, a final recommendation would be for unions and advocacy groups that support PSWs, to hold regular events that train workers, and increase awareness surrounding PSW rights. These sessions would raise awareness and teach PSWs how to raise workplace concerns to employers, how to file transportation costs on taxes, and about their rights surrounding travel time and breaks.

Of each of the six recommendations above, the first and last policy would likely be most fair, and be most useful for PSWs. The remaining four recommendations that focus on reimbursement, may create inequalities, as some workers would receive more reimbursement than others based on method of transportation, which could limit the types of transportation that could be used. The first policy would ensure that all workers receive the same amount of reimbursement, and it could be used for whatever form of transportation a worker chooses. This reimbursement policy would reduce the cost for those who use more expensive forms of transportation (i.e. a personal vehicle), and potentially cover the entire cost for workers using cheaper forms (i.e. public transit). The final recommendation will increase awareness of rights for workers, creating better working conditions and ensuring that all workers are treated equally and fairly. Reimbursement and awareness will also increase retention rates for workers in this field, and will act as an incentive for individuals considering work in this area (Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012; Kirsch, 2013; Seto, 2013). However reimbursement is organized, workers will benefit, as stress surrounding finances will be reduced and workers will be able to provide better care to their clients.

Although reimbursing PSWs is ideal, it may be difficult to implement, as the government would need to either raise taxes or reallocate funding differently. The Ontario budget in 2016, stated that \$250 million per year would be dedicated to community services (Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). The Ontario Community Support Association (2016) explains that this funding is to increase PSW minimum wage, and to invest in hospices. Increased wages can offset the cost of travel reimbursement; however, it is perhaps more important to recognize the essential component of transportation to the PSW job. Additionally, more older adults will

prefer, or have to stay at home as they age, indicating that hospices may not be an option for many Canadians (Hoskins, 2016; Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). Therefore, perhaps the budget can be re-worked, so that funding is either equally distributed to increase wage, invest in hospice care, as well as to reimburse home-care PSWs; or priority can be given to the wage increase and transportation reimbursement.

With a reimbursement policy, not only will PSWs benefit, but clients, employers, and the government will also receive advantages. Clients will receive better care, and will have PSWs caring for them that are healthy, and well compensated. Receiving effective care will increase the client's health, well-being, and overall quality of life (Canadian Union of Public Employees & Ontario Council of Hospital Unions, 2012; Chou & Robert, 2008). Employers will benefit from a reimbursement policy, as they will receive adequate funding that will be allocated specifically for PSW transportation reimbursement. Other funds they receive can be used towards other expenses such as administration, organization, and infrastructural updates (Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). The government will benefit in the future when the majority of older adults decide to stay home and receive care (Hoskins, 2016; Ontario Community Support Association, 2016). With the reimbursement policy, the government will likely have enough workers to care for the large population aging at home, as workers have an incentive to join the field. The government will also likely save money, as they will not have to pay for people to stay in hospitals who are well enough to live at home. A reimbursement policy is an effective way to positively benefit a large number of workers, organizations, professionals, and clients in the coming years. Therefore, it is clear that policies and regulations need to be implemented and followed, to ensure that PSWs in the home care field are receiving fair reimbursement for transportation and travel time between client homes.

Future Research

Due to the fact that much of the information surrounding this subject is grey literature, it is important that scholars and professionals begin to look into the transportation issues PSWs face when providing home care. More research in this area may increase awareness about the issue, potentially leading to a resolution. In addition, an increase in scholarly work may put pressure on the government to make plans quickly and efficiently, as baby boomers begin to require more care. More research in the field may also identify other problems PSWs face in home care, and explore possible solutions to those problems as well.

Future research in this field could also address the care techniques PSWs use when rushing at client homes. This research would address the issue, and outline or hypothesize ways to regulate or ensure that proper techniques are being used. Research could also be done from the client's perspective, and determine if they identify any issues in home care.

Furthermore, research could be done that specifically focuses on transportation issues. For example, some research could focus on how much compensation would be fair as a reimbursement standard for PSWs. Other work could outline how many workers do and do not currently claim the tax deduction for work related travel, and determine how this could affect taxpayers and the government.

Conclusion

Personal support workers that work in the home care field are currently suffering under poor working conditions. They earn a low income, do not receive benefits, work long hours and are responsible for paying for transportation to and from their clients homes each day

(Akjiratikarl, Yenradee, & Drake, 2007; Ejaz, Noelker, Menne, & Bagakas, 2008; Lilly, 2008; Penfold, 2011; Stewart, 2013).

Not having adequate pay, or benefits impacts workers lives, physically, emotionally, and financially, causes stress, and negatively affects how well they can care for their clients (Shamian, O'Brien- Pallas, Thomson, Alksnis & Kerr, 2003). Society as a whole suffers as well, from inconsistent, and potentially poorer quality of care for vulnerable older adults. Therefore, reimbursing PSWs for transportation costs is important, to providing excellent care and as an option of keeping people in their homes as they age. Throughout this paper the various impacts relating to negative workplace conditions were explored, the main issues regarding transportation were outlined, whether or not these issues impacted clients was determined, other parties' opinions and perspectives were outlined, and potential solutions, as well as policies were presented. It is clear that both personal support workers, as well as clients need better treatment. Therefore, reimbursing workers for transportation is necessary, as many parties will benefit, and ensure that Ontario is prepared and able to provide exceptional home care to a growing population of older adults. One simple way to address the issues of the poor working conditions and the precarious nature of PSW work, which may also positively impact employer needs for a reliable workforce with less turnover and society's need to maintain or expand levels of home care, would be to provide standardized transportation and travel reimbursement in some form.

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