



Notice of MaineCare Rule Change: Employment Earnings for People Living in Residential Care

Dear Members of the Disability Community,

We are writing to share information about a recent MaineCare rule change which will have a significant effect on employment for people with disabilities who live in residential care.

As of February 18, 2015, MaineCare no longer allows an "Earned Income Disregard," for working people with disabilities who live in residential care settings. These settings include certain kinds of group homes licensed as Private Non-Medical Institutions (PNMIs), including Adult Family Care Homes, Residential Care Facilities, and Cost-Reimbursed Boarding Homes.

This important deduction used to allow working individuals to keep roughly half of their job earnings, while paying the other half toward their "cost of care." **With the new rule change, individuals will only get to keep \$70 a month of their income – whether they are working or not.**

Although this rule change should not affect anyone receiving services under a waiver, it appears to be doing so. It will also affect many individuals with developmental disabilities and mental illness who do not receive waiver services, including those on waitlists.

Many working individuals in these group homes have already been impacted by this change. Since no allowances are made for work expenses or transportation costs under the new rule, many are weighing whether they can afford to keep working going forward. Others are wondering whether it is worth it to have a job at all, if employment only causes their MaineCare costs to increase and they can only keep \$70 a month. Providers and clients are struggling to understand this change, and to budget for these increased MaineCare costs.

If you have further questions or know of affected individuals, please feel free to contact the Disability Rights Center at 626-2774 x216.