



# The Care Giver Extra

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United Domestic Workers of America

## 2007- A YEAR OF GREAT NEW CONTRACTS

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Great New Contracts
- UDW Officer and Executive Board Election and the lifting of the AFSCME Administratorship
- All Time High Union Membership
- Battle Over Direct Deposit Won
- California Firestorms Of 2007

*"Wages have increased between 20% to 61% since the first contracts in 2002 to 2004. WOW!"*

The UDW bargained six Public Authority and three Addus HealthCare Contracts. We were fortunate to have AFSCME's star negotiator, Curt Ostrander, as the UDW Lead Negotiator. A very big thanks goes to our UDW members who volunteered as members of these very successful bargaining teams.

### The results:

- ✓ **Kern County** - a one year contract with 12.5% wage increase to a high of \$9.00 per hour and health insurance dollar contribution at state maximum.
- ✓ **Butte County Addus** - 3.4% to 7.7% increase in wages over two years including less time necessary to reach wage steps; increased travel time reimbursement; two new covered services; and, funeral leave benefit enhancement (ratification count December 4<sup>th</sup>).
- ✓ **Merced County** - 20% wage increase over three years to a high of \$9.00 per hour and increased number of providers eligible for health insurance.
- ✓ **Placer County** - 17% wage increase over three years to a high of \$10.00 per hour and increased number of providers eligible for health insurance.
- ✓ **Riverside County** - 27% wage increase over four years to the state maximum of \$11.50 per hour and the new health benefit of dental and vision.
- ✓ **Santa Barbara County** - 10% wage increase over three years to a high of \$11.00 per hour and additional 107 providers added to health insurance. Registry providers receive a \$25.00 stipend, plus wages, to replace a provider within two hours.
- ✓ **Santa Barbara County Addus** - 3.5% increase in wages over two years to a high of \$11.39; increased travel time reimbursement; two new covered services; and, funeral leave benefit enhancement (ratification count December 4<sup>th</sup>).

- ✓ **Stanislaus County** - 14% wage increase over three years to high of \$9.38 with CPR training at no cost and no cost for security checks for registry providers.

UDW Public Authority Bargaining Unit Members have come a long way from the days before their union contracts when wages were at \$6.95 or \$7.11 an hour with no health benefits or grievance procedure. Wages have increased between 20% to 61% since the first contracts in 2002 to 2004. WOW!

It has not been an easy road but at every step of the way, UDW members - whether Addus or Public Authority members - have shown up at Board of Supervisors meetings in their "green shirts" to show solidarity and speak on behalf of their fellow providers. UDW members have written letters, made phone calls, and sent emails to assure that the decision-makers for their wages and benefits knew their stories and why they deserved increased wages and benefits.

## **HOME CARE PROVIDERS + UDW = POWER & LEADERSHIP**

### **UDW OFFICER AND EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION – LIFTING OF THE AFSCME ADMINISTRATORSHIP**

For the first time in the history of UDW, union members voted to elect working home care providers to lead their union and their future. The top vote getters are listed on the UDW website at [www.udwa.org](http://www.udwa.org). We are waiting for the Department of Labor, who supervised the election, to certify the election results. Upon this certification, the new UDW Officers and Executive Board members and Local Chapter Boards will be installed and our parent union, AFSCME, will lift their administratorship and the UDW will be governed by UDW home care providers.

In 2005, AFSCME imposed an administratorship over the UDW citing the Officers and Executive Board for financial mismanagement. All former officers and board members resigned. The UDW was over \$3,000,000 in debt at the time. Today, thanks to the management of AFSCME, the UDW is out of debt and has restored its credit and credibility.

The next edition of the *Caregiver* will have the certification results and more information of the new Officers and Executive Board and the local Chapter Boards.

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## UDW UNION MEMBERSHIP AT AN ALL TIME HIGH

20,142 new union members have signed up during the AFSCME administration. Thanks to our AFSCME and UDW organizers and Member Organizers and the new UDW philosophy of home care providers leading the union - new membership in the UDW is at an all time high.

If you have never signed an authorization card and are not a union member a card and postage-free envelope is enclosed or you can call your local office or the Member Communication Center toll free at 800/621-5016 for more information. Become part of this powerful movement to control your own future.

<p><b>IT COSTS NO MORE TO BE A UNION MEMBER THAN A FEEPAYER</b></p>
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## UDW WINS THE FIGHT FOR PROVIDER DIRECT DEPOSIT

Direct deposit of payroll checks for IHSS providers has to be approved by the California Legislature before it can become a law and receive funding. The UDW and its supporters feel that home care providers deserve what most working Californians receive from their employers.

Direct deposit is much safer than a mailed check - it can't be stolen. Providers will no longer lose a percentage of their hard earned money to check cashing places - payroll checks will be deposited in a bank. Providers will no longer wait days after the check has been mailed from the State Controller to receive the money - direct deposited payroll is available when deposited. Since 2003, the UDW has supported efforts for free direct deposit and from 2003 to 2005 efforts to get legislation passed failed. In 2006, the UDW made free direct deposit for providers as its legislative top priority and introduced no other legislation.

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With our intense focus on the bill introduced by Representative Bonnie Garcia, (Riverside and Imperial Counties) the UDW had 73 co-authors (legislators signing on in support of the bill) who believed this was important for home care providers. The bill passed!

Direct deposit is scheduled to be implemented in May 2008. The only criteria to use direct deposit are that a home care provider must have worked at least 90 days and that they have a bank account.

For providers without bank accounts, the UDW is working with several banks throughout California to make this process easier for you. To enroll in the direct deposit program, you will be required to fill out forms - the UDW will have meetings throughout the State to assist filling out the forms and we will provide a special toll-free "hot line" to help by phone. We speak Vietnamese, Chinese, Tagalog, Japanese, Spanish, and Somalia.

We have spent many years trying to achieve free direct deposit for our members. For those of you who have contributed to the PEOPLE (People Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) - this is an example of what PEOPLE can do for home care providers. For the many home care providers who have attended Sacramento rallies and have helped to educate our Legislators about home care providers - many thanks for your invaluable contribution. More information will be available about direct deposit in the coming months.

## THE 2007 CALIFORNIA FIRESTORMS

As fires raged over Southern California and especially hard hit San Diego, the UDW home, we were all worried about family, loved ones and our members.

As soon as the San Diego freeways were cleared and staff was able to get the office, we quickly sent letters and automated calls to the affected areas telling members we are here to help and that the filtering masks, no longer available in the affected areas, were being sent from Washington, D C by our parent union, AFSCME for distribution to providers and clients.

The San Diego organizing office staff went to shelters to volunteer and look for our members to assist them with hotels, food, and other resources. We mobilized a "firestorm hotline" which gave state and community referral telephone numbers to members in our Southern California counties.

When we were allowed in the affected areas, organizers went out to members' homes - or in some cases, just ashes - to give masks, food, and financial assistance. We found three UDW members who suffered a total loss. AFSCME sent a special presidential envoy to help our members and to give funds to start rebuilding their homes.

Here is one story of a member with a total loss:

Nicole Booth's home in Ramona (San Diego County) - built by her husband's grandfather - was burned to the ground. She is hoping to recover some items of sentiment and value when she begins sifting through the debris.

A member of the UDW, Nicole is a provider for her 15 year old daughter, Alexia. Thanks to AFSCME, the UDW was able to help this family start their road to recovery by giving them a check for \$5,000.

To bring pride to all home care providers we would like to tell about our encounter with Laura Gregoire, a UDW member in San Diego. Laura and her family were evacuated for six days and we assisted them with food when they returned. Her home had damage and the carpet and part of the roof had to be replaced besides the cleaning of soot from the entire home. When we asked her if she wanted financial help, Laura replied, "No, thank you. Please give any financial assistance you were going to give me to those families who suffered a total loss. I was lucky and they need all the help we can give them."

The cities and counties of the burned areas in addition to community resources rallied to the concern and care their fellow citizens. Although we told stories of loss, there are so many UDW members who helped their families, clients, neighbors and communities through this terrible crisis. We are proud of them and proud to have been a part of helping.

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