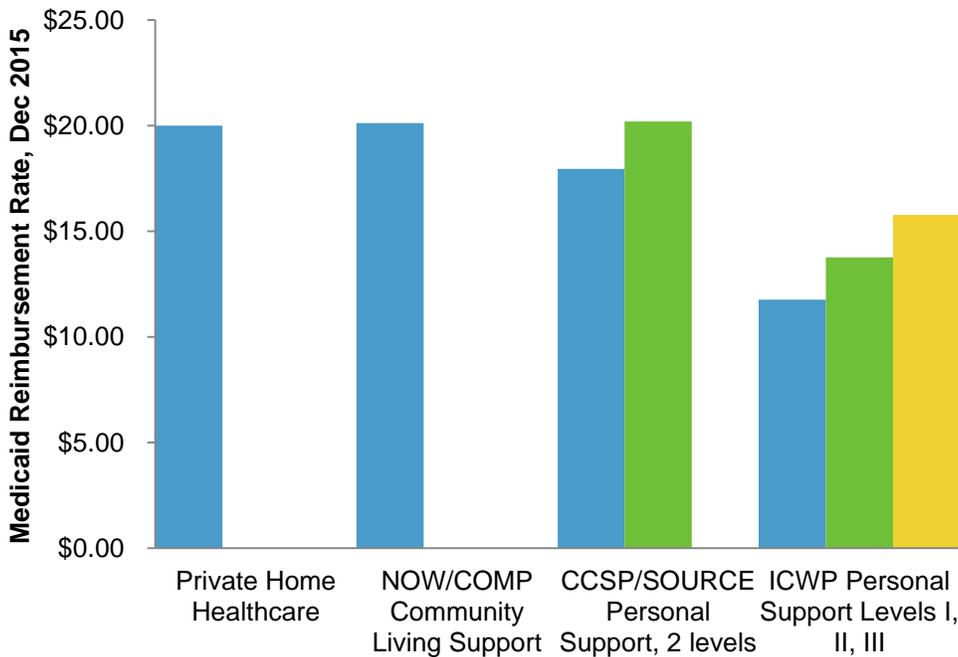




The Independent Care Waiver Program, or ICWP, allows young and middle-aged adults with significant physical disabilities or brain injuries to live in the community instead of nursing facilities. The 1,300 Georgians who use ICWP are between 21 and 64 years old.

ICWP: Impossibly Low



Personal support – assistance with daily tasks like bathing, dressing, meals and housekeeping – is the core of the ICWP, and that rate is extremely low. Currently, the state rate for ICWP Personal Support is between \$11.76 and \$15.76 an hour. After a home health agency takes their cut, **working caregivers often get \$8 or \$9 an hour. It is difficult to impossible to find decent caregivers for such a low wage.**

If Georgians on ICWP can't find caregivers, they have to go to **nursing facilities – which require far more taxpayer dollars than care at home.**

The 1996 car crash that took his father's life left Craig Minnix with a traumatic brain injury. Ever since, finding caregivers has been a struggle.

Craig's story is sadly typical of Georgians on ICWP. He has been:

- **hospitalized as a result of a caregiver failing to give him medication for days**
- **evicted when the owner of his host home was arrested**
- **abused by a caregiver who withheld food as punishment.**

Craig's sister Cindy Saylor says, "We have interviewed some wonderful qualified caregivers who would not work with Craig unless we paid them \$20 an hour, **but for the low pay rate we largely end up interviewing caregivers who can't even pass the background check.**"



Craig Minnix of Gainesville sustained a brain injury when he was hit by a reckless driver.

ICWP's Impossibly Low Rate = Terrible for Georgia Families



Debbie Wellbrock & family after church.



Liz Persaud uses ICWP and works full-time at Georgia Tech.

Debbie Wellbrock was seriously injured in an accident at age 18. The struggle to find adequate caregivers under ICWP began almost immediately.

Debbie wandered away from her apartment for weeks at a time, and one time was sexually assaulted. In 2001, **she moved into a host home where she was physically abused.**

Finally, Debbie's parents built an apartment on the back of their home, and found a family friend who agreed to live with them rent-free and be Debbie's caregiver. **Debbie's caregiver makes \$8.75 an hour. The .75 cents from the Georgia General Assembly last year was her first and only raise in 10 years.**

Young and middle-aged Georgians don't belong in nursing facilities. A serious accident can befall any Georgian at any time, leaving them in need of ICWP. **But in order to remain a viable alternative to a nursing facility, ICWP's impossibly low rate has got to change.**

The Solution: Raise the ICWP Personal Support rates to mirror the CCSP/SOURCE Personal Support rates, so Georgians and their families can find and keep adequate caregivers.

UNLOCK ASK: We recommend raising the ICWP Personal Support rates to mirror the CCSP/SOURCE Personal Support rates in FY 2017. FY 2017 budget impact: \$3,774,382

Thank you for your past support, our General Assembly – let's keep up the good work to keep Georgians on ICWP out of nursing facilities.

"As a result of the ICWP current pay rate being so low, I often have to rely on family and friends to provide my care.

If I'm unable to find someone to fill in a time slot for my morning routine then my mom, dad, siblings or friends come help me out. What this means is that they are either late for work or end up missing work altogether.

"Not only am I independent and working full-time as a taxpaying citizen, the cost-benefit analysis proves that ICWP over a nursing home environment is the better choice.

It only makes sense to provide these valuable caregivers with respectable pay."