



Over 300 home care workers took the time to sign our letter and send it to the MGEU.

110 shared specifics about their concerns. Here's some of what they had to say:

"25 minutes including travel is not enough time to give a client with mobility challenges a bath in a safe and gentle manner."

"The word 'care' is disappearing. My day is go, go, go, and I'm still being asked to fit more clients in."

"In 20 minutes, I am expected to help a 95 year-old client get undressed, get in the shower, bathe, get out of the shower, apply lotion, and get dressed. Ten minutes for travel is built into this time. IMPOSSIBLE."

"In 20 minutes, I am expected to heat and serve a meal, stay with the client while they eat, administer medicine, and do the dishes. Ten minutes for travel is built into this time. IMPOSSIBLE."

"I work evenings so I can look after my children during the day. During the same length of shift, my number of clients has nearly doubled since I started. I really don't feel like I'm caring for the elderly anymore. All I do is drive. I will get my schedule and they will have slashed another 15 minutes off another client, without informing me, to fit in yet another client they need to get off their desk. There are serious safety concerns for both clients and workers. I rush through my med checks and have little time or energy to engage in civil conversation or check on their well-being. I am not only physically exhausted from getting out of the car and fighting traffic so often, but mentally exhausted because each rushed call takes a little bit from you. Sometimes there is nothing left to give."

"All I know is that if these clients were my parent or sister or aunt, I'd want to make sure we had enough time to do our jobs without risk of injury or mistakes. As it is, we're rushing so much accidents could and probably will happen."

"It's not like we work in a care home, where your next client is a short walk down the hall. Sometimes the weather is bad, or traffic is bad, and it takes much longer to get from Client A to Client B."

"There is constant pressure of hurry, hurry, hurry. In time, this will cause someone to get hurt, either a client or a worker in a car accident."

"I am just finishing with Client A and I'm already supposed to be with Client B. Client A feels rushed and Client B wonders where I am."

"More and more, clients are being added to the same schedule. I've ended up going back on my supper break to finish washing a client's dishes."

"Back to back clients with no flex time for travel in rural locations makes working safely and correctly difficult. Many of my clients are well over 80 years-old and I cannot push them to move faster! Even very organized workers cannot do this in the allotted time frame!"

"I am allotted ten minutes to get from Selkirk and Main to a client on Henderson Highway...Google directions says it takes twenty minutes in good conditions."

"We are allotted five minutes to apply eye drops. But the client must be lying down, and the instructions say to apply in one eye, wait five minutes, and apply in other eye!"

"We are allotted ten minutes to put stockings on an elderly patient. This is a very difficult task when a client has mobility issues. Either a client or worker is going to get hurt."

"Times are tough, but we have to stick together in this world to help each other. That's why many of us chose this career. I don't think anyone is aware of how hard this kind of work is. Most of us are living pay cheque to pay cheque."

"I cannot do a 90 year-old's bath who has major medical issues in 30 minutes. Most seniors are quite slow, it takes time to set up the bath, find the supplies and get the client to the bathroom."

"Five minutes to administer medications is ridiculous. How can we be the eyes and ears of the office with no time to talk with clients about how they feel? Previously, an MS patient was given two hours in the morning...now we are allowed half that time with them."

"The driving time allotted is insufficient. For example, it takes me 25 minutes to reach my client's place, 30 minutes to complete my task, and then another 25 minutes to reach my next client. According to the schedule, I'm allotted 45 minutes in total. The numbers don't add up."

"The weather over the last six weeks has made our job even harder. We are in and out of our car constantly, battling the weather and traffic conditions to rush to our next client."

"In 2006, my client was allotted 45 minutes for their bath. This same client is now allotted 25 minutes. How does this make sense?"

"Over the years, I used to have one hour with this client, including 10 minutes travel time. This allowed me to complete my task with rushing either the client, or myself (getting my coat and boots on, down to my car, through traffic, to the next client, taking my coat and boots off). Now I am allotted half that – 30 minutes, including travel time."

"I am now always watching the clock instead of speaking with clients. I want to give them care, but I'm most concerned with getting in and getting out."

"It's the clients who are losing out. In winter, we have to steal time away from them just to get to the next client on time."

"They give us so little time to get from one client to the next, it's like they think we have magic carpets!"

"Our clients grew up in an era where they worked very hard and I don't believe they should be rushed now, at a time when we should be giving back and caring for them. They deserve better."

"All that seems to matter now is saving the all-mighty buck for the system."

"We get pressure from the employer not to work overtime, so unfortunately, it's our clients who are receiving lower standards of care."

"I believe that all clients, especially the non-verbal ones, deserve the respect of their home care worker not being rushed in and out of their homes, but having time for a simple conversation. In some cases, we are the only people they speak to all day, and I believe the clients feel more comfortable and trusting if they have a few minutes to get to know us. As for baths, I cannot bathe myself, dress myself, apply cream/powders, and tidy the bathroom in half an hour. Can you? Think what it's like for ill and physically frail people."

"Clients are beginning to feel like they're just a number. I heard of one worker who sets a timer for each task she is so afraid of going over time."

"In rural areas, travel times are way too short. In order to get to all my clients, I have to cut down the times I spend with each client. Stress, stress, stress."

"I have a client with MS who uses a Hoyer lift. We used to get 60 minutes for morning care and physiotherapy exercises. We are now down to 45 minutes and have three workers with back injuries."

"Many clients are afraid to complain about the decrease in services because they're afraid they may lose their home care. What happened to making sure the elderly and sick eat properly? We barely have enough time to get in the house, wash our hands and find out what the client wants to eat; never mind administer medication, prepare lunch, let them eat and clean up. I have worked for home care for over 29 years. I enjoy my job. I get satisfaction from knowing I am helping clients stay home longer instead of taking up beds in hospitals or going to a nursing home. I like the interaction with them. But since the cut-backs in task times has been put in place, all this has gone down the toilet. Rushing through tasks leaves the clients very uncomfortable and some clients don't ask for help to meet all their needs because they feel they are imposing on us."

"Client safety is being compromised. How do you park your car, go up an elevator, change your shoes, heat up a meal, serve it, clean up and ensure a client's well-being in twenty minutes? Reduced task times are an accident waiting to happen. Client safety is being compromised. I sincerely hope something is done to rectify this really terrible situation."

"I've been a home care worker for thirty years, and never have I had so little time to care for my clients. Clients shouldn't feel like they're just a job to us. They shouldn't feel stressed out or anxious when we arrive. They should feel relieved and comforted."