

Improving Quality of Life for Iowa’s Nursing Home Residents Personal Needs Allowance

Could you make ends meet with only \$50 a month to spend on your personal needs? In Iowa, Medicaid recipients living in nursing homes are only allowed to keep \$50 a month to cover their personal expenses, this is known as Personal Needs Allowance (PNA).

What is the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA)? Medicaid rules indicate that a resident’s PNA may be used to cover the costs of items not provided through the Medicaid program, so examples of that would be: hair care, snacks, clothing, cell phone or streaming services and other personal-use items.

Why does an increase in PNA matter? Providing an increase in resident’s PNA is a major quality of life issue for nursing home residents that is widely supported by residents, advocates and community members. In 1988, the federal government increased the Medicaid (PNA) to a minimum of \$30 per month. In 2001, the Iowa Legislature increased the PNA amount monthly to \$50, but since then there have been few increases to keep up with the cost of inflation.

Nationally, almost half of the states provide more than \$50 for their residents’ [PNA: What Your State Lets You Keep](#). The PNA in Iowa was last increased more than 20 years ago and prices today are almost 2 times higher than prices in 2001. According to information from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), a dollar today only buys 58 % of what it could buy back then.

Item Cost / inflation Rate Increase 2001 to 2022



What can the Legislature do? In 2023, to keep up with inflation, the Iowa Legislature would need to increase the monthly PNA amount to a minimum of \$85. This can be done through additional funding in the Health and Human Services Appropriations bill. This increase would keep Iowa more in line with inflation but more importantly, it would make a huge difference in the lives of Iowa’s nursing home residents by allowing them the flexibility to purchase items they need.

What can the public do? Join more than 400 supporters of increasing the PNA in Iowa by signing the [PNA Increase Petition](#) (started by Iowa nursing home residents) or talk to your legislator directly by following the link below.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KQH3B_WjRCKWR2kB5yPobulutjKB7GbZMVz1GB6xibU/edit?usp=sharing

The Office of the State Long Term-Care Ombudsman supports resident-initiated petitions and requests for funding to improve the quality of life in long-term care facilities. For more information, please contact the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at 866-236-1430—we look forward to your support!