



STAFF PHOTO BY ANGELA ROWLINGS

**HELPING HAND:** Sara Peterson, left — one of the 25,000 newly unionized Bay State home care workers getting a 15 percent raise today — aids multiple sclerosis sufferer Liz Casey in Roslindale.

## Care workers get 15% raise

By **CHRISTINE McCONVILLE**

Today, 25,000 Massachusetts workers will get a 15 percent pay raise.

And that's not all.

The state's personal care attendants will receive health insurance and paid sick time, too.

"It's the beginning of a real win-win situation, for the care-givers, the state and people like myself," said Liz Casey, a longtime multiple

sclerosis sufferer from Roslindale.

She is one of an estimated 20,000 Massachusetts residents, all seniors and people with disabilities, who benefit from personal care attendants' services.

But until now, the attendants earned \$10.84 an hour, and received no benefits.

Their new contract will be finalized today at the Veronica B. Smith Senior Center in Brighton.

It comes one year after the attendants formed a union with District 1199 of the Service Employees International Union. It was the largest union election in New England's history.

Casey said the new contract will provide more stability for people like her, who often lose trusted attendants to better paying jobs at fast food restaurants and chain stores.

She also said the new

contract will save the state money, because home-based care for seniors and people with disabilities is much less expensive than institutional or nursing home care.

"If I hadn't gotten care in my home, I believe I would have ended up in a nursing home," Casey said.

"So am I excited?" she said about the new contract. "Yes, I am."

— cmcconville@bostonherald.com

