

# cash & counseling consumer story

*Mr. Calvin Dodson, Trenton, N.J.*



Calvin Dodson, who is blind, has impaired physical coordination from being struck by a car, and requires dialysis for kidney disease, remembers well the challenges of working with a home care agency.

“I used to change agencies every three months because I was so frustrated,” he says. “It seemed like I got a different worker every week. I was always having to explain everything from the beginning, every time. And those that came, usually came late or left early, and never wanted to do the jobs I needed them to do.”

Despite his physical challenges, Calvin, who is 50, wants to be independent for as long as he can. Through New Jersey’s Cash & Counseling program, called Personal Preference, Calvin has been able to hire people he knows he can rely on. “I’ve only had three different workers since I joined Personal Preference six or seven years ago,” he says. Currently, his sister works for him in the mornings and evenings.

Calvin also used part of his monthly Personal Preference allowance to purchase a voice-activated microwave so he could prepare his own food, as well as voice-recognition software for his computer so he could do his own online shopping for groceries, clothes and other necessities.

“I tell other folks in the building about Personal Preference,” he says. “I tell them it’s me who is in control, instead of the agency. I know that the money is paying for what it is supposed to pay for. And the money I’m able to pay my sister helps her out too.”