

Shortage of direct care workers is real

Michael Wolnerman, Des Moines, Letter to the Editor 5:31 p.m. CT Feb. 16, 2017



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The recent series on the direct care workforce by John Hale was spot on. As a family caregiver for my parents, our family has experienced, first-hand, the challenges of finding well-prepared and reliable home care aides. Some of them are amazing, most are not. My statement is always the same, "We are not paying peanuts." For those caregivers who want

to work, there are plenty of opportunities. Staying on as a caregiver is a bit more challenging. These workers are vital to filling the gaps left when our family can't be there 24/7. It may be tough to understand how difficult it is caring for a parent or loved one until you are faced with it personally. I am living it and let me tell you, it is tough and you will eventually be faced with it!

What I've learned over the past few years about the direct care workforce has been eye-opening and it should be a wake up call to all Iowans. Reading about these issues in The Des Moines Register is one thing but living them is quite another.

The Iowa Legislature has an opportunity this year to place a priority on health and long-term service and support workforce issues and they should act! There is no question that the workforce is out there and all they need is some support in ways of education, direction, worthy pay and consistency. Understand that absence of action on the part of policymakers means an absence of care and support services for the Iowans they represent.

— Michael Wolnerman, Des Moines

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