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## Nursing home data only good if used

Di Findley

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The Aug. 17 Gazette article "Keeping Caregivers" by Erin Jordan, sheds light on the important issue of staff turnover in nursing homes.

Data and statistics can be sliced in various ways. It is important that consumers, employers, elected officials and others consider those variations.

In the past, nursing homes reported, on their cost reports to the Department of Human Services (HHS), a "total turnover rate" for all staff. They lumped, together, the turnover of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), licensed nurses, housekeeping, maintenance, social workers, etc.

They are now required to report the turnover by worker classification. CNAs provide about 80 percent of the direct hands on care in nursing homes assisting with eating, dressing, bathing, walking, toileting, oral care and other personal hygiene, and much more.

The annual turnover rate of CNAs is typically higher than other worker classifications.

In those instances, the impact on the quality of care is far greater. As pointed out by The Gazette, the state is doing very little analysis on the data it is collecting. A preliminary correlation analysis linking high CNA turnover to nursing home deficiencies was done by the Iowa CareGivers. The findings were statistically significant and justify the need for more detailed and ongoing analysis. Departments of Human Services, public health, inspections and appeals, researchers, the attorney general's office, and others should make this a priority. The data is only good if we learn from it and use it to make life better for older Iowans, their caregivers, providers and you.

Di Findley

Iowa CareGivers

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