

# Letter: Nursing shortage bad for nurses, quality of care



From Fran Mancl Elm Street, Hazel Green, Wis. Nov 1, 2016 (1)

The Telegraph Herald article on Oct. 24, "A growing epidemic: Nursing shortage hits Dubuque area" was no real eye-opener for me. As a CNA in Dubuque for 25 years, I experience first-hand the impact that the shortage of nurses, and direct care workers, has on very vulnerable lowans needing services of care and those providing it.

Christine Kirsch's comment, "it causes the staff here (Sunnycrest) to work an extraordinary number of hours, which causes them to become ill," is a reality shared by many area health care organizations.

A supportive work environment and quality care is compromised when nurses and direct care staff are stressed, tired, working additional hours, and frustrated with multiple requests for their immediate availability to provide personal support and care. Those receiving care may need to wait.

Direct care professionals are part of the largest workforce in Iowa and the front-line of personal support and care. Research indicates 20,000 additional direct-care workers will be needed in the state by 2020. Where will they come from? What will invite them to join the direct care workforce?

Direct care is a credible career I highly value. It often lacks recognition. Direct care workers need education credentials recognized by the state, public support and trust to ensure their job is really important, and just compensation that will encourage others to enter, able to make a living, and stay in the profession. Recruitment and retention of direct care professionals might then be a lesser issue.