

Enhancing the quality of care by providing education, recognition, advocacy, and research in support of those who work in the field of direct care.

Delivering information to those at the center of quality care

## Nearly 500 Direct Care Workers Receive a Thank You From Principal Volunteers *(See page 14)*



Principal volunteer with What's Poppin' merchant in Cedar Falls.

“Receiving the card and gift really lifted my spirits”

— **Jill Ridpath, CNA**



Thank you for the Casey's gift card. I've worked as a Home Care and Hospice Aide for 30 years. I also make daily visits to see my son, Chris, from a window at a facility where he lives. Chris has cerebral palsy and multiple other disabilities. They are taking good care of him and so far COVID free.

Pictured: **Suzie Erickson, Home Care and Hospice Aide visits her son Chris**



...In a time like this, every little help makes a big difference. COVID puts a heavy burden on healthcare workers especially we the CNAs. Every day we are worried about our health, the well-being of our families, and worried about our seniors who are dying in large numbers. We are ready and proud to get up every day to ensure that our seniors are cared for.

Pictured: **Augustine Fallah, CNA**

## Empowering Care

by **Fran Mancl, CNA**



The past several months for direct care professionals have been tough, both physically and emotionally. The coronavirus pandemic has required the discomfort of wearing masks, face shields, and/or isolation gowns during moments of caregiving. Your act of kindness toward direct care workers is measured in the genuine love and respect with which it has been offered.

*Cont'd on page 4*

“... thank you for the Casey's gift card. It's been hard but wouldn't change my job at all. The residents need us even more now.”

— **Paula Luther, CNA**



**Iowa CareGivers Annual Conference Postponed until 2021**

*Cont'd on page 3*

## BWA Foundation Awards \$2,500 Grant to IC

“We are pleased to support the Iowa CareGivers' (IC's) efforts to promote leadership among women who work in direct care as a way to enrich their personal and professional lives, and to ensure we have a strong and well-prepared direct care workforce in the future.”

— **Lisa Minear, BWA Foundation Past President** *Cont'd on page 14*

## Northwest Area Foundation Awards Grant to IC

“Direct care workers are 'essential' to our economy, but decades of harmful policies have sidelined their safety and health and stunted their wages. Iowa CareGivers (IC) is building the power to make real and lasting change.”

— **Karla Miller, Program Director, Northwest Area Foundation** *Cont'd on page 14*

## INSIDE:

- Voter Information
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- And Much More...

## CARE ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION AND QUALITY CARE? THEN STAY INFORMED!

Receive up- to-date information about educational programs, direct care news, & other opportunities!

**Sign up NOW!** Complete the form on our website at [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org).

You can also sign up by phone or request a form at 515.223.2805 or by email at [information@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:information@iowacaregivers.org).

Make sure to update your address and contact information if you have moved.

This newsletter is made possible by **UCS Healthcare and Northwest Area Foundation**

# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS & SUPPORTERS TO VOTE?

## GENERAL ELECTION: NOVEMBER 3, 2020

With the General Election 2020 quickly approaching it is critical that direct care workers (DCWs) understand the importance of voting for candidates who are familiar with and understand issues facing DCWs and want to do something about the issues!

As a DCW or one who supports DCWs, you are concerned about many issues that affect you and your family; i.e. how you are able to provide care, support and services to those needing care, safety in the workplace for you and those you care for, what you will be paid for the important work you do, staff shortages, DCW education and credentials, and how you receive your own health care! Many of these concerns existed before COVID-19. During the pandemic these issues along with many others including access to personal protective equipment (PPE), priority COVID-19 testing for DCW, access to paid sick leave and increased childcare assistance are ever more urgent!



Julie McMahon, Iowa CareGivers Consultant

Elected officials at both the state and federal levels make important decisions about policy and how they will spend our money (taxes). Their decisions directly impact how and if we will have a stronger direct care workforce now and in the future! Make certain your profession's voice and the voices of those you support are heard in the upcoming election.

Before you vote in the November election, think about the issues/problems that are important to you and then look for candidates who understand and share your concerns. Take steps to make your vote count in November! 1) Register to Vote if you aren't already registered. 2) List concerns that affect you including those outlined in the Iowa CareGivers' COVID-19 response (see page 4). 3) Look for opportunities to learn about the candidates and how they might share some of your concerns. Visit their websites, email them or call their office. Don't be afraid to ask questions about a candidate's position on issues important to you. It's how you can become an informed voter!

**Your Voice-Your Vote Are Critical!**

## DAY AT THE CAPITOL: MARCH 12, 2020

Special Thanks to Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council for providing the training and speakers Sally Chapman, Jenn Wolff, Cindy Ramer, and Julie McMahon.

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER!

### IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING:

October 5, 2020 – November 2, 2020

### VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Saturday – October 24, 2020

Election Day Registration & Voting

Tuesday – November 3, 2020

### DEADLINE TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT:

Friday – October 30, 2020

### DEADLINE TO RETURN COMPLETED ABSENTEE BALLOT:

Tuesday – November 3, 2020

9:00 PM CST

### For registration requirement and additional information:

<https://bit.ly/2NObICO>



# REMEMBER LIFE BEFORE COVID-19: WE HOPE TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN SOON

We know that you are among those dealing most directly with the COVID-19 crisis. We are concerned about the safety of you, your families, and the countless numbers of Iowans and families you help every day. Therefore, we are postponing our conference until 2021.

***New dates will be announced in September. Stay tuned! See 2019 conference photo gallery at: <http://bit.ly/393mnty>***



Iowa CareGivers is creating a positive space for direct care workers, family caregivers, and supporters to engage in conversation during this COVID-19 crisis. Join the Conversations by commenting on our Facebook page!

Due to COVID-19 all in-person classes have been cancelled, postponed, or will move to Zoom.



# IOWA CAREGIVERS COVID-19 RESPONSE

IOWA CAREGIVERS (IC), IN ITS ROLE AS AN ADVOCATE FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS (DCWS) AND OTHER HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND THE IOWANS THEY SERVE, HAS PROMOTED THE FOLLOWING COVID-19 PRIORITIES:

Visit: <https://bit.ly/2Ztx4oY> to view the full document.

1. Priority Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for direct care and childcare workers
2. Priority onsite COVID-19 rapid testing for direct care and childcare workers and all nursing home and other congregate care setting residents
3. Address core needs of the DCWs
  - Access to health care coverage
  - Access to paid sick leave
  - Increase childcare assistance
4. Conduct early intervention and mitigation efforts in care settings where a single positive case of COVID-19 of staff, resident, or consumer is confirmed



## ACCESS TO PPE AND TESTING IMPROVED BUT STILL INADEQUATE

### DCW AND EMPLOYER SURVEYS OFFER GLIMPSE INTO COVID EXPERIENCE

Direct care workers and health and long term care employers were surveyed on access to PPE, testing, and child care. June follow up survey reveals some improvement over April/May surveys.

**View results at: <https://bit.ly/2A4GpL4>**

*“Obviously, I don’t want to risk transmission of COVID-19 to residents, but I also know that mental health is important to these residents, and that involves seeing family and speaking with other people outside of staff.”*

### Direct Care Workers and Child Care & COVID-19 Challenges (March 2020)

- **58%** said they had missed work due to not having access to child care.
- **49%** said they can’t afford the cost of additional hours of childcare needed due to school closures.
- **42%** said their childcare provider is a family member or friend who can no longer provide care because they are at high risk for contracting COVID-19

### Direct Care Workers and PPE (April 2020)

- **58%** had concerns about reusing PPE.
- **38%** didn’t have all the PPE they need to do their job safely.

### Direct Care Workers and Testing (May 2020)

- Only **17%** of DCWs who responded had been tested for COVID-19.
- **30%** of those who wanted a test couldn’t get a test.

### Follow up on COVID Response (June 2020)

- **70%** said that access to PPE had improved over the last month.
- While **21%** say they still do not have all the PPE they need to do their job safely.
- **76%** said that access to testing had improved over the last month.
- **84%** said that not all of their residents and staff have been tested for COVID-19.
- **29%** have concerns about reopening nursing homes.

## EMPOWERING CARE By Fran Mancl (Continued from front page)

The COVID-19 crisis has taught us what can happen to residents when they are isolated from others and one another. But surrounded by multiple colored hearts, the phrase posted on the windows of the facility where I work offers hope—*We are all in this together, even though we are apart.* That communicates the shared passion within the heart and hands of every direct care professional. Caregiving is essential. Living in the shadow of COVID-19 takes caution and courage. We are willing to take risks to empower ourselves, co-workers, and residents to create the beauty of compassion, hospitality, and sustained health so as to go on living with dignity.



# COVID-19 CHALLENGES OR CONCERNS IN A NUTSHELL

- Keeping the residents safe.
- Staffing shortages.
- Fear of taking the virus home to my husband and kids who have asthma.
- Working without proper PPE.
- That we finally get the pay and respect for the essential jobs that we do, and not be forgotten.
- Risking my own health.
- If I should contract COVID-19, how long I'd be out of work and how to pay the bills while I'm sick.
- Having emotional/mental health support during this time.
- Not enough PPE and having to reuse some items. Feel like it's unsafe for everyone.
- Challenges visiting patients in their homes.
- Concerned about losing my residents to the virus.
- It has been an emotional rollercoaster. Watching people you have worked for get sick and die.
- Huge increase in depression among patients due to restrictions.
- Immune compromised person in my household.
- Several reported spouses had lost their jobs due to COVID-19.
- Numerous responses about financials and bills being behind.
- It's very stressful!

*"We are doing the best we can with what we have to work with. Our residents are our top priority and we are doing everything we can to keep them safe. We would like the government officials to help keep the workers safe physically, mentally and financially. We are risking our lives and our families' lives but compensation seems to shift in the wrong direction. I am a mother of 3 young adults 17,19, 20 they were all laid off due to this virus and I am the sole provider until they are able to go back to work or look for employment. It's very hard to do and still pay our bills please try to understand that workers need more money because honestly no amount is worth a life and saving lives is our main focus so why not take some of the financial stress off essential workers shoulders and let us focus more on safety and taking care of our residents."*

*"We need understanding of what we do and why we do it. How important it is to keep ourselves safe in order to be able to help keep others safe."*

*"Reporting of Assisted Living/ Memory Care facilities that have positive cases to report the same as Nursing Homes and to post somewhere upon screening desk that a facility has had a positive case reported. I was exposed for a week with no notification."*

*"Being a health-care worker I wish that staff could get tested in the start of this knowing that people can be non-symptomatic. I know there are no positive cases in our facility at this time the stress of not knowing is overwhelming and frightening."*

*"The healthcare profession needs more hands. Continuing scholarships, like Iowa Last Dollar Scholar, and making it easy to obtain, will help our situation, including other high-demand jobs."*

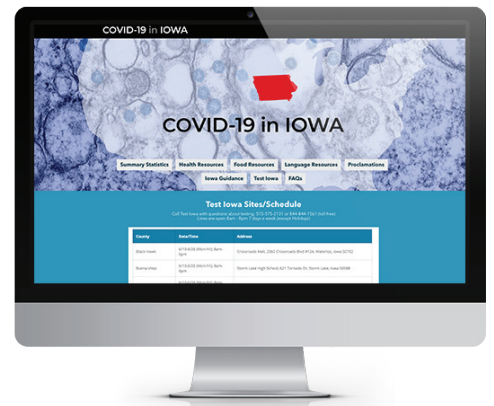
*"I wish all front line employees could be tested."*

*"Please make sure that we have proper supplies, education and support."*

***This is a time of rapidly changing circumstances. At the time of printing, the COVID-19 information and resources were the most current.***

# VISIT IOWA'S CORONAVIRUS WEBSITE FOR THE MOST RELIABLE INFORMATION

[coronavirus.iowa.gov](https://coronavirus.iowa.gov)



## 2•1•1

IF YOU ARE AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS COVID-19 QUESTIONS, DIAL 2-1-1.

If you are a healthcare provider with COVID-19 questions, call 800.362.2736.

## TEST IOWA

CALL TEST IOWA WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT TESTING: 515-575-2131 OR 844-844-1561 (TOLL FREE) LINES ARE OPEN 8AM - 8PM 7 DAYS A WEEK (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

In May, Governor Reynolds announced an expansion of TestIowa so that anyone who thinks they should be tested, can be. Go to <https://www.testiowa.com/> and complete the assessment to set up an appointment.

## CNAS, HEALTH FACILITIES, AND CORONAVIRUS



Check Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals website for more information on health facilities and Coronavirus. You can also find information about **temporary** waivers and reopening guidelines for organizations here. <https://dia.iowa.gov/about/novel-coronavirus-covid-19>

**Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) who are interested in assisting acute or long-term care facilities that become overwhelmed during this COVID-19 outbreak or suffer a loss of staff due to illness, please follow these instructions:**

- Create an account and a profile at <https://www.iaserv.org/>
- In order to assist, it is important that you complete the online profile with your CNA certificate/Direct Care Worker Registry information to be eligible for deployment. Once a profile is completed in the system, you must click on "SAVE."
- You will then receive an email from "@notify2.mir3.com" that verifies that you created or updated an account. You will receive notification from "iowaresponds" with information if you are being requested to deploy.

See also the Frequently-Asked Questions for Health Facilities on information about working as a CNA during the COVID-19 response at <https://bit.ly/2ZwujTE>



# UNEMPLOYMENT, PAID LEAVE & OTHER LEGAL CLARIFICATION RE COVID-19

## STATE OF IOWA AND FEDERAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19 — TAXATION OVERVIEW

### Legislative Services Agency: April 2020

This legal update summarizes tax-related actions the state of Iowa and the federal government initiated in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The update is not a comprehensive description of each action and does not describe all state and federal tax-related actions initiated in response to COVID-19.

**Unemployment Insurance Claims.** A person laid off due to COVID-19, or who is required to stay home to self-isolate or care for family members due to illness related to COVID-19, is eligible to receive unemployment benefits, provided the person meets all other eligibility requirements. Work search requirements for unemployed persons have been temporarily waived. Employees who are laid off, or are unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19, are no longer required to use all paid leave prior to being eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. A person collecting unemployment who refuses to return to work is not eligible for unemployment benefits unless the person has tested positive for COVID-19 or does not have access to child care due to COVID-19.

**Unemployment Compensation.** Temporary unemployment compensation is provided in the amount of \$600 per week to each recipient for up to four months, which is in addition to regular state and federal unemployment insurance benefits. Unemployment benefits were extended to self-employed workers, independent contractors, gig-economy workers, and those with limited work history. If an employer receives a loan under the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and places a recipient of the temporary unemployment compensation back on the payroll on a full-time basis, the recipient is no longer eligible to receive the \$600 a week temporary unemployment compensation.

### Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) - Sick or Family Leave. Health Care Employers Are Exempt

The FFCRA requires certain employers to pay sick or family leave wages to employees who are unable to work or telework due to certain circumstances related to COVID-19, and employers are entitled to a refundable tax credit. However, if you are a health care worker, it is up to the employer whether employees will be allowed to receive the COVID-19 benefit. Learn more here: <https://bit.ly/2Bwzgn5>

See the Full Legal Update Here: <https://bit.ly/31zH6Yf>



If your employment has been impacted by COVID-19 closures, visit the Iowa Workforce Development website at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/COVID-19>.

You can file for unemployment easily online through Iowa Workforce Development at <https://bit.ly/2VzS9wG>. If you have questions or are unable to file online call 1-866-239-0843.

### Where can I get help with legal issues like eviction, unemployment, public benefits, and more... during the COVID-19 outbreak?

**A legal hotline has been established for Iowans.** You can call 1-800-332-0419, or visit our website at <https://bit.ly/3f3nyQ5> for information on a multitude of legal topics.



**For more information on Eviction Foreclosure Prevention Program:** Visit <https://bit.ly/3iphbbU> or reach out to the Housing Recovery Help Line at 1-855-300-5885



**Workplace Safety Rights**  
See page 12.



# MOUTH CARE MATTERS

*Mouth Care Matters* (MCM) is a one-day competency-based oral care training curriculum originally designed for those in direct care and since tailored for a wide array of health care professionals serving in a variety of settings. Managed by the Iowa CareGivers (IC) and taught by certified instructors who are dental hygienists, the program advances practical, hands-on skills and knowledge on how to provide the best oral care possible for lowans of all ages and abilities regardless of setting.

The development of the MCM program was supported by grants from Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, and the Iowa Department of Public Health. Since then, over 700 health professionals representing 70% of Iowa's 99 counties have received training.



## Mouth Care Matters Phase II: A Path to Implementation

In July 2019 IC received funding from RRF Foundation for Aging and Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation for Mouth Care Matters Phase II: A Path to Implementation.



**Phase II is focused on building and sustaining good oral care in home and community based settings. Partners on this 18-month grant include:**

- **Home Instead of Urbandale**
- **Senior Housing Management (Norwalk, Mason City, Grundy Center)**
- **Western Home Communities (Cedar Falls)**
- **Madrid Home Communities (Madrid and Huxley)**

The purpose of Phase II is to develop and test models of oral health practice integration and sustainability to ensure that older lowans receive optimal oral care in Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) settings. The goal is to demonstrate that with the right tools and support, providers can sustain effective oral health practices that result in better oral health for the lowans they serve, a better prepared staff, and reap potential long-term cost savings.

One of the tools being tested is the newly developed MCM Employer Implementation Toolkit. This comprehensive Toolkit offers a variety of training and educational resources, as well as tools for organizational change.

Iowa CareGivers and the provider partners successfully offered 12 one-hour MCM in-services to all provider staff and three 8-hour MCM classes to 36 nurses, therapists, and other health care professionals.

### MCM and COVID-19 Transition

Nine 8-hour classes were planned for this spring, but have been postponed due to COVID-19. We recognize the tremendous burden this pandemic is placing on all aging services organizations and the health and social dangers facing staff and older adults. COVID-19 has impacted grant activities and IC is collaborating with the Project Partners on modified plans for the remainder of the grant period. COVID-19 has compounded the challenges of staff shortages and scheduling as we develop training offered in an electronic format in lieu of in-person classes. IC will work with Project Partners how we still achieve systemic changes that integrate and sustain good oral care practices in the future.

**For more Information:** <https://bit.ly/2BuiHsj>



# TRIBUTE AND TOAST TO CAROL VAN AERNAM

**ON MAY 20TH OUR TEAM MEMBER AND DEAR FRIEND, CAROL VAN AERNAM, PASSED AWAY AT UNITY POINT IN DES MOINES**

*She adored her family and we extend our condolences to them. She was also part of the Iowa CareGivers family. With over 40 years of experience as a registered dental hygienist, she brought her passion and expertise to Mouth Care Matters (MCM). As part of our MCM Team, Carol inspired us to be strong advocates for increased access to good oral care. She has left us a legacy that we can build upon and we will continue the work that she loved so much. She was an amazing instructor and touched the lives of so many with her message about the importance of oral health. She also touched the hearts of many through her humor, kindness, and grace.*

—Mary Ann Young on behalf of Iowa CareGivers

*“Such a force and beacon and I know her legacy will continue in so many ways. I will miss her earthly presence. I do believe that new star in the firmament will continue to grace us all with light. It really is difficult to put into words the scope of how much Carol meant to all of us, isn’t it. Such a widespread force of love and knowledge that reached so many - and each of us in its own special way.” With sadness and gratitude.*

—Sharon Kuttler, Mouth Care Matters Instructor

**Please see the post on our facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/iowacaregivers>



**Carol Van Aernam**

**“We will miss her but so glad that she was part of our lives!”**

— Lifelong Smiles Coalition

## MOUTH CARE MATTERS A NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE

**IOWA CAREGIVERS (IC) WAS RECENTLY NOTIFIED THAT MOUTH CARE MATTERS (MCM) WAS SELECTED TO BE INCLUDED IN THE 2020 COMPENDIUM OF RURAL ORAL HEALTH BEST PRACTICES**



**NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION**

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA) with DentaQuest are engaged in an Oral Health Initiative to remove disparities and improve the oral health of rural populations. A product of the collaboration is the Compendium. It highlights innovative practices and flexible approaches from around the United States that can be built upon in rural communities. The Health Resources & Services Administration- Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) coordinated the selection process.

The IC Board, staff, instructors, and volunteers are honored and delighted to be recognized by valued national organizations and; take this opportunity to gratefully acknowledge all MCM partners and supporters. See page 8 for more information about MCM.

We’re optimistic that life will return to normal at which time we will turn our focus once again to the MCM program and its sustainability so more people can have access to this great program. We are able to celebrate this national recognition only because of the commitment and collaboration of so many individuals, organizations, and foundations that made the investment.

*We dedicate this honor to the memory of our late friend and colleague, Carol Van Aernam, who was and will remain the spirit, spunk, and smile behind the program. And if Carol were here she would remind us all of how vitally important oral health is to those with COVID-19, pneumonia, and on ventilator support.*

## THERE IS NO HEALTH WITHOUT GOOD ORAL HEALTH

By Carol Van Aernam, RDH, BA

*Carol lives on, in this her final article...*

**Thanks to** Dr. Howard Cowen and Robin Mc Neil, RDH, University of Iowa College of Dentistry, for reviewing the article and providing final edits.

**Note:** COVID-19 care guidelines and regulations are changing frequently at both the federal and state levels. The responses and expert advice below are basic infection control precautions but always be sure to check the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and [www.coronavirus.iowa.gov](http://www.coronavirus.iowa.gov) for the most up to date information.

**Question 1:** What do we know about oral hygiene and the Covid-19 virus?

**Answer:** As of this date (June 2020) we do not have research or studies on the effect of good oral hygiene and the Covid-19 Virus. We do have studies about similar viruses, (Cold, flu, and rhino viruses). That, in turn, gives us information about the importance of good oral hygiene dealing with viruses.

**Question 2:** Is there a relationship between coronavirus and oral health?

**Answer.** The bacteria associated with Periodontal Disease and Gingivitis have an immune-suppression effect that increases our susceptibility to the cold and flu viruses like influenza and rhinovirus. If we aspirate bacteria and viruses into our lungs it can affect our respiratory health and increase the risk for pneumonia. Covid-19 has significant respiratory effects, and increases the risk for pneumonia. Coupled with poor oral health, this could significantly impact the symptoms associated with Covid-19. Maintaining the health of the lungs is of utmost importance.

If your immune system is weak or you have a chronic disease such as heart disease, asthma, lung disease or diabetes, it is important to have a healthy mouth to protect your immune system and enable your body to protect you and those you serve.

**Question 3:** What do I need to do to protect myself and those I serve while providing or assisting with all types of oral care?

**Answer:**

- Always follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and organization guidelines and regulations to prevent cross contamination and infection.
- Wear a face mask and gloves.
- Wear goggles, glasses or face shield to protect your eyes from splatter.
- Wear a gown to provide cares and change when soiled or per organization regulations.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after giving oral care or if contaminated. Remove gloves when completed. Or use a hand sanitizer before and after providing oral care or if contaminated during oral care.

**Question 4:** What do I need to do to provide a healthy mouth for those I serve?

**Answer:**

- Brush teeth at least twice daily for approximately 2 minutes to reduce the plaque, bacteria and viruses in the mouth to keep it healthy and protect the rest of the body.
- Use Dental floss, interdental brushes or other interdental devices if possible. This helps to remove the plaque from places where it is hard for the toothbrush to reach.
- Use a mouth rinse that can kill both disease causing germs and deliver fluoride to strengthen the teeth.
- Brush the tongue to reduce the bacteria and viruses in the mouth.
- Rinse the toothbrush out after each use and air-dry. Replace it if the person served is ill from a cold, flu or other viral diseases.

**Question 5:** What about dentures, partials or other dental appliances?

**Answer:** Wash your hands (before and after) or wear gloves before handling dentures, partials or other appliances. They can harbor bacteria and viruses, (including Covid-19) and become aspirated into the lungs, increasing the risk for getting pneumonia. Removing them at night and scrubbing with a denture brush and placing them in a cup with a denture cleaner is particularly important to reduce aspiration into the lungs.

### For additional information:

**Mary Ann Young**, Consultant, Iowa CareGivers  
phone: 515-360-7003 email: [maryann@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:maryann@iowacaregivers.org)

## UNUSED DRUG DISPOSAL IS ESSENTIAL, ESPECIALLY WITH MORE IOWANS AT HOME

### UCS HEALTHCARE AND RALI IOWA OFFER FREE DISPOSAL BAGS FOR IOWANS

This spring, many Iowans spent more time than usual at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media newsfeeds were filled with pictures of before and after lawn projects, cupcake baking challenges and triumphant results of spring cleaning and purging of closets and drawers to help pass the time. But one important area that may have been passed over in your COVID cleanup is your medicine drawer.

Whether cleaning out the medicine cabinet for you or someone for whom you provide care, disposing of unused, unwanted or expired medications could be the most important cleaning project of all. UCS Healthcare has partnered with Rx Abuse Leadership Initiative (RALI) Iowa to provide a safe, contact-free option for safe drug disposal.

#### Why are we promoting safe drug disposal?

In the United States, four billion prescriptions are filled each year and one-third are not used, leaving 200 million pounds of unused medications, according to [disposemydrugs.org](https://www.disposemydrugs.org). A jumble of unused medications cluttering medicine cabinets and drawers in the home is dangerous for a variety of reasons. Older residents of the home may mistake one bottle for another and take the wrong medication. Visitors may be tempted to steal leftover prescription pain medications. Grandchildren may mistake capsules or pills for candy and become very ill or accidentally overdose.

“The best way to prevent opioid use disorder is to take your medications as prescribed and only for the amount of time needed,” advised Misty Angrick, Medical Services Director at UCS Healthcare. “Many times you may be prescribed more than you will need, especially with pain medication. When this happens please dispose of those medications in a safe, effective manner to prevent others from obtaining access.”

For all these reasons and more, disposing of expired or unused prescriptions reduces risk and eases the worries of misuse. It's important to dispose of unwanted medications properly. The bad news is flushing the medications in the toilet or emptying pill bottles into the garbage isn't safe for the water or the environment. But the good news is there are several easy and safe ways to dispose of old medications.

**How to safely dispose of unwanted drugs:** UCS Healthcare has partnered with RALI Iowa (<https://www.rali-ia.org/>) to help Iowans safely dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications as well as expired vitamins and supplements.

1. Order a free drug disposal bag from UCS Healthcare and we'll mail it right to your door. Just add your unwanted medications, add water, seal the bag, shake it and throw it in your garbage. Call us at 515-280-3860, provide your address and ask for a drug disposal bag. You can also email us at [ucsinformation@ucsdsm.org](mailto:ucsinformation@ucsdsm.org) or visit <https://bit.ly/2BUqdN5> to request a disposal bag.
2. Visit a drug takeback center in your community. Visit [Learn more at https://bit.ly/2NN5ugR](https://bit.ly/2NN5ugR) or ask your pharmacy for the nearest location.
3. If no other options are available, mix your medicines with kitty litter or old coffee grounds in an airtight container and dispose of it in your trash can.



*your partner in total health*

### Having prescriptions fall in the wrong hands – either by accident or purposefully – can lead to overdose or death.

Angrick from UCS Healthcare added, “The last place you want your leftover opioids or other narcotics is in the hands of the wrong people, especially teens or young adults. Stolen medications become “party favors” or can be sold or exchanged for extra money or other substances. This is one way opioid use disorder can start with young adults. The safest way to dispose of your medications is in the free disposal bags we are offering.”

Since COVID-19 is still a real threat in Iowa, especially to vulnerable populations, requesting a free drug disposal bag may be the safest option. This simple step can keep unused prescriptions out of the hands of family members, friends and especially teenagers who live in or visit the home.

#### In addition to disposing of unwanted medications, there are other steps you can take to safely have medications in your home or the home of a person you provide care for:

- Store medications in a locked container.
- Request your/their healthcare providers give you smaller amounts of medication at a time such as weekly instead of monthly prescriptions.
- If you keep opioids in the home please keep naloxone in the home in case of an accidental overdose. You can receive naloxone from your local pharmacy or by contacting Tele-Naloxone, a partnership between the Iowa Department of Public Health and University of Iowa Healthcare. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2Ztlj0E>

UCS Healthcare is a nonprofit integrated healthcare provider with 14 locations in Iowa. UCS offers confidential and inclusive care for physical and mental health including substance use disorder, medication assisted treatment, primary medical care and psychiatric care. For more information visit [ucsonline.org](https://ucsonline.org)

# PROTECT YOURSELVES FROM SCAMS!

*This information is for you and those you serve. Please share.*

**WHILE MANY OF US ARE SOCIALLY DISTANCING, SCAMMERS ARE STILL HARD AT WORK ATTEMPTING TO SEPARATE YOU FROM YOUR HARD-EARNED FUNDS. HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU KEEP YOUR MONEY SAFE:**

- Don't answer your phone if you don't know the number calling you.
- Don't click on any links in a text message or email if you don't know the sender, or the message is being sent out of the blue. Use caution even if you do know the sender.
- Don't provide personal information over the phone, via text, or email.
- Don't pay in advance for stimulus money, information about aid programs or investments in the latest miracle cure - it doesn't exist.
- Don't use gift cards for payment. Anyone who demands payment by gift card is running a scam.
- Research any investment recommendation that encourage you to liquidate investments. Another financial product with higher returns may incur higher fees or additional risks. Check your financial professional's license at <https://bit.ly/2Brh7aE>

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***lowaFraudFighters.gov is a resource to learn about recent scams being seen in Iowa that currently include investment, technology, lottery, IRS, and romance scams, to name a few.***

# KNOW YOUR WORKPLACE SAFETY RIGHTS!

**By Robin Clark-Bennett, Labor Educator, University of Iowa Labor Center**

Direct care workers perform essential work that your patients/consumers depend on to heal, thrive, and experience life with dignity. When your workday ends, your own families rely on you too. Protecting your safety in the COVID-19 crisis is of the utmost importance, but the various laws and guidances related to workplace safety, medical leave, and unemployment can be confusing. To assist Iowa workers in learning about and defending their rights, the Labor Center at the University of Iowa has a variety of educational resources on our website – including some specifically focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. Our fact sheets and manuals contain information related to questions such as:

- **What should my workplace be doing to protect us during COVID-19, based on OSHA and CDC guidelines?** Public attention has focused mostly on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like masks and shields, and it's true that employers' duty to provide clean, fitting, quality PPE at no cost to workers is extremely important. But workers should also become familiar with the other guidelines these agencies have established, to assess additional steps your employer could take. Links to these resources can be found in the COVID-19 Safety and Health fact sheets on the Labor Center's website.
- **Do I have a legally protected right to raise concerns about unsafe conditions at work?**  
Yes. Several laws protect your right to speak out about safety concerns. The Occupational Safety and Health Act establishes workers' right to complain to the employer about conditions they believe are unsafe, and prohibits discipline and intimidation by the employer. If two or more workers raise concerns together, they gain additional protection from the National Labor Relations Act, which gives workers the right to act collectively to improve working conditions – whether or not they have a union in the workplace.

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Please visit our website for fact sheets, videos, and manuals about these and many other questions, at <https://laborcenter.uiowa.edu/resources-workers>. If you have additional questions, you are also welcome to contact Labor Center educators at 319-335-4144 or at [labor-center@uiowa.edu](mailto:labor-center@uiowa.edu).

# IMMUNIZATION UPDATE

By Gloria Vermie, RN



Gloria Vermie

*During the pandemic direct care workers are wondering about immunizations. More than ever it is important to stay safe, take care of yourself, your families and those in your care. Each day we hear about COVID 19; but do you hear about any polio, or Ebola outbreaks in the USA? No, and the reason you do not is because of the great immunization programs.*

## Frequently Asked Questions and Advice



- **Will immunization requirements for students attending licensed childcare, elementary and secondary schools in 2020-21 be delayed or suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic?** At this time, the Iowa Department of Public Health does not plan to delay or suspend immunization requirements for the 2020-21 school year. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/38iPmNt>
- **What immunizations are needed for adults and has it changed with the pandemic?** Adults need vaccine protection too. During this pandemic health care professionals can be at higher risk. Staying current with routine immunizations can protect you from serious disease complications. A complication such as getting pneumonia when you have flu. First call your clinic or local public health to schedule your vaccination. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/38hqxSa>
- **How about well-child visits and immunizations during the pandemic?** Parents admit to being concerned about taking babies to medical appointments during the pandemic. However, keeping infant vaccinations on schedule is important. Clinics are taking extra precautions to keep their patients and staff safe. Call your clinic, or pediatrician to get all your questions answered before scheduling the appointment. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2YQjBsg>
- **What about Coronavirus vaccine?** At this time there is no Coronavirus vaccine for the public. Worldwide research teams are working on safe, effective coronavirus vaccines. Currently in 8 states 600 individuals who have been vaccinated are being watched and studied carefully. After that, several thousand volunteers will be vaccinated and studied. When the vaccines are fully developed, the Federal Drug Administration will study the results and give final approval. For more info visit: <https://bit.ly/38luFAs> and <https://bit.ly/31zRWxf>. Until there is a vaccine available to prevent COVID-19, it is very important to stay safe by doing the things that protect you and prevent coronavirus spread.

## WHY IS PREVENTING FALLS IMPORTANT FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS?

By Carlene Russell, Iowa Fall Prevention Coalition Member  
Please share this information with family caregivers and others.

We all know someone who has fallen— everybody falls, no matter what age. Unfortunately, for many older adults, a fall can result in serious injuries that include hip fractures, broken bones, and head injuries. The good news is that most falls can be prevented. As the caregiver, you have the power to reduce your loved one's risk of falling, and your own fall risk as well.

For those over the age of 65, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths. One in four older adults fall each year. In Iowa, more older adults die from a fall than from a car accident. The causes of falling vary with contributing factors including loss of leg strength, use of four or more medications, poor vision, chronic health problems and fall hazards in the home.

Falls, with or without injury, carry a heavy burden on quality of life. After a fall, many older adults develop a fear of falling again and limit their activities which begins a cycle of becoming weaker, increasing the risk for repeat falls and injuries.

Falls also impact caregivers. Research has shown that after a care recipient's fall, caregivers report a significant increase in caregiver burden, fear of falling, and depression. Taking action to address the risk of falling is an important way to stay healthy and independent. To help caregivers, the National Council on Aging has developed "Falls Prevention Conversation Guide for Caregivers".

The Guide includes a checklist to help determine if there is a risk for a fall and if further action is needed. The checklist is designed to be answered individually so it can be answered by the caregiver and then by/for the care recipient.

To address the risk of falling, the Guide has other resources including a Fall Prevention Action Plan. The plan provides seven strategies to help develop the plan and reduce risk for falling. One of the strategies includes participating in a community-based falls prevention program such as A Matter of Balance, Stepping On, Walk With Ease or Tai Chi. Many communities offer these programs that have been proven to help people reduce their risk and fear of falling. Your Area Agency on Aging can provide information on fall prevention programs near you. Call Iowa LifeLong Links at 800-532-3213 to be connected to your local Area Agency on Aging.

**The Guide and additional information can be accessed at these websites:**

**Falls Prevention Conversation Guide for Caregivers**  
<https://bit.ly/3fYSDER>

**Iowa Fall Prevention Brief 2019**  
<https://bit.ly/3hYjcvC>



# Caring Community

IOWA CAREGIVERS



**Jim Miles-Polka**

I have recently taken on the role of chair of the Iowa CareGivers (IC) Development Committee. The need to support those in direct care has become even more urgent during the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank all of our donors, sponsors, and grantors for recognizing that those on the front line of the pandemic and IC are worthy of our support. We also want to thank our grantors and contractors for the flexibility on terms and scopes of work during the COVID-19 pandemic. A complete list of our donors and sponsors can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2019-ic-donors> and <https://bit.ly/2020-ic-donors>

Visit <https://bit.ly/3eGMPJ6> to support these essential workers and Iowa CareGivers



## BWA

*(Continued from front page)*

The funded activities will build upon a 2019 BWA Foundation grant by utilizing recorded interviews with direct care workers on a number of topics. The interviews will be edited into video messages that can be shared through social media.

The purpose of the videos is to engage those working in the field of direct care in educating the general public and other stakeholders about who they are and what they do and particularly now as these workers are among those on the front lines of fighting the pandemic.

Visit <https://bit.ly/3c9s64Y> to view the press release in its entirety.



## PRINCIPAL VOLUNTEERS

*(Continued from front page)*

Thanks to #TheGivingChain from Principal Financial Group. A group of Principal employees, led by Amanda Carroll, recognized the hard work of nearly 500 direct care workers in Iowa during the COVID-19 crisis, sending gratitude and local gift cards for a job well done. We are so honored by their support for caregivers, as well as the opportunity to support local business— Scenic Route Bakery in Des Moines, Jitters Coffee Bar Downtown > Outback in Mason City, Here's What's Poppin-Cedar Falls, as well as Casey's General Store.

Thank you to everyone involved to support those on the front lines of COVID-19.



## NORTHWEST AREA FOUNDATION

*(Continued from front page)*

Northwest Area Foundation <https://www.nwaf.org/> mission statement: "We advance good jobs and financial capability not only by making grants, but also through investments that produce both economic and social returns".

The \$30K grant is supporting efforts to conduct outreach to those in direct care, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes social media and other communication strategies, newsletters, and efforts to increase awareness about who direct care workers are and what an important role they always play but particularly during these challenging times; ensure they have access to reliable resources related to COVID-19; and advocacy to ensure their basic needs are being met as they work on the frontlines of COVID-19.

## BOARD MEMBER

**Heather Elammari**, an RN, teaches Prepare to Care and the Certified Nurse Aide training for Ottumwa Job Corps. She also teaches at Indian Hills Community College (IHCC) and is a state OBRA testing evaluator. She received her LPN and RN degrees from IHCC and recently finished her bachelor's in nursing degree from Western Governors University (WGU). She plans to continue her education to become a nurse practitioner. She has worked in both hospital and nursing home settings. "I absolutely love the Iowa CareGivers and believe in the mission. Direct care workers are a major part of the nursing team and without them the patients, residents, or consumers would suffer greatly. Heather said, "I am so grateful to be given the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors for this amazing organization." In her spare time she enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, and studying. The newest members to our family are two husky puppies. My boys and I are taking a training class on how to help them become well-behaved, life-long companions.



Heather Elammari

## DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

**Ellery Duke** recently "mostly" retired from his 39.5 year position as Executive Director of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center. He continues seeing clients part time as a psychologist and pastoral counselor at the Center. A native of southern Illinois, he attended Southern Illinois University, Garrett Theological Seminary, and Northwestern University for his graduate degree, leading to his becoming a licensed psychologist in Iowa. He is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. In retirement, Ellery enjoys time and travelling with his wife, Marsha, a retired psychiatric social worker, his daughter, son and their families, which include 3 grands. "Being asked to join the Iowa CareGivers Development Committee is an honor. Supporting the frontline caregivers is essential as our society evolves, and increasing numbers of our population have need for the essential services of those who provide specialized healing, loving care. Hopefully, my experience can be helpful to the board."



Ellery Duke

## VOLUNTEER CONSULTANT

**Gloria Vermie** lives on a farm near Des Moines. Her children and grandchildren are her life and she enjoys international travel, gardening and haiku. She is a RN and MPH public health professional having worked in hospitals and clinics also, at local and state public health departments in IA and KS. Her areas of expertise are rural health and community population health. Some of her time is dedicated as a volunteer with select organizations and groups. "I don't consider it work when I can help improve life and circumstances for others." She started her nursing career as a CNA in a skilled nursing facility. "To this day, I remember the hard work being a CNA". "For years I have admired and respected IA CareGivers. The leadership, Board, Advisory and staff are all aligned with the mission. They are all strategic, accomplished, transparent, and trusted. Di Findly makes me laugh and sometimes frightens me with her tenacity. I'm pleased to help out at IC".

## TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR THE DIRECT CARE PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Iowa CareGivers (IC) Direct Care Professional Advisory Council serves an important role and are part of our organizational governance. They provide a voice to discussions, promote events that are important to peers, network in a variety of settings, and help at conference. They keep us rooted in our mission and make sure we are serving the needs and best interests of those who provide direct care and the Iowans they help.

If you or someone you know has a passion for the profession of direct care and a commitment to changing the way society thinks and talks about those in your field, this opportunity may be for you! If you are interested in a position on the council, please contact [pam.biklen@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:pam.biklen@iowacaregivers.org) for an application or visit our website at [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org).



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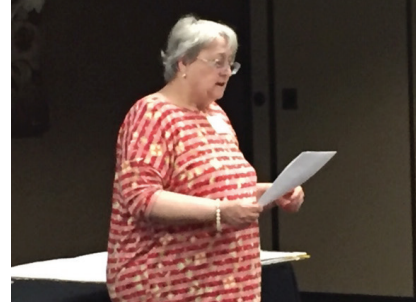
## HEAR FROM TWO OF OUR NEWEST COUNCIL MEMBERS

**The reason why I wanted to serve on the council is because** I wanted to have the opportunity to make a difference in my professional career, by advocating to my legislators on the bills we want passed and also my concerns with Direct Care worker shortage, the Direct Care Data Base and to speak at a group function. I also want to promote and educate all the programs to my coworkers and other Direct Care Workers that Iowa Care Givers has to offer us. Thank you.

—**Sally Chapman**, CHPNA HA and current IC Council Member

**I enjoy being on the council.** It most definitely makes me work outside of my box. I have always been interested in trying to figure out a way to get more young people interested in direct care. Iowa CareGivers (IC) helps with getting higher wages and benefits and working on getting a data base to have everyone's credentials in one central location. The council is a wonderful group of fellow DCWs that are always ready to help in any way they can. IC has different programs to help us understand our patients better and to take better care of them. Mouth Care Matters is an awesome program. We also get to do a Day on the Hill to talk to our Senators and Representatives about our needs and help get bills passed that would help.

—**Donna Cheers**, Hospice Team Assistant, and current IC Council Member



Sally Chapman, CHPNA HA and current IC Council Member doing welcome to participants at an advocacy training day



Donna Cheers; Rob Sand, State Auditor; Sally Chapman at the Building a Strong Direct Care Workforce Forum

**Make sure to visit us on the web at: [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org)**  
**and you can follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)**



**Please remember** to update us if you have any name or contact information changes, so that you can continue to receive the Iowa CareGivers HUB and other program announcements. Thank you.

Iowa CareGivers does not discriminate in its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, creed, national origin, ancestry, color, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or any other protected class under relevant state and federal laws.