

Iowa CareGivers strives to elevate the direct care workforce and the difference they make in the lives of Iowans.



Dear Friend,

For those of us at Iowa CareGivers, the first of the year signals the beginning of the Iowa Legislature's session and our work advocating for programs and policies that better the lives and livings of Iowa's direct care workers (DCWs)—the certified nursing assistants, home care aides, direct support professionals, hospice aides, and others providing direct, hands-on care for Iowans of all ages and abilities in workplace settings throughout Iowa.

While most of our day-to-day efforts at Iowa CareGivers go into supporting DCWs through education, programs, and resources, **our advocacy work is a crucial part of our mission.** Many of the policies debated this session are issues with ramifications for these dedicated caregivers—ramifications that ripple out, affecting the lives of every Iowan ... Iowans such as you and me and those we love.

OUR TWO TOP PRIORITIES WHEN WE ARE SPEAKING WITH LEGISLATORS ARE:

- 1.** *Increasing DCW wages that have shown little growth since 2019 so they don't need to rely on state-funded supports like HAWK-I (the children's health insurance program), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and childcare subsidies.*
 - A.** Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for all providers that employ Direct Care Workers so they can pay higher wages and ensure the additional funding goes toward Direct Care Worker wages.
 - B.** Ensure people with disabilities who utilize waivers and employ their own caregivers are paid a Medicaid rate high enough to recruit and retain caregivers so they can remain in their own homes and communities.

A United Way 2023 Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed (ALICE) Report found that, of the 20 most common occupations in Iowa in 2021, 70% paid less than \$20 per hour. *Many DCWs fall below the ALICE poverty threshold.*

"I worked two jobs for 12 years in order to work full-time in the job I loved the most...direct care."

—Fran Mancl, retired Certified Nursing Assistant



2. *Requiring the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing to include the DCW Registry in their plans to streamline licensing boards into a single system and the necessary funding to do so.* Direct care workers are often burdened by the lack of consistency and portability of their training and currently have no continuing education standards that enable them to retain their credentials, making it difficult to recruit and retain the workforce. There is no statewide central database system to maintain permanent training records for the entirety of the direct care workforce, which increases costs, delays employment, and forces DCWs to undergo repetitive training.

YOUR SUPPORT IS IMPORTANT!

Direct care workers enable Iowans to survive and thrive across generations. The field is valuable and demanding and requires specialized skills where workers routinely make highly consequential decisions about and with care recipients. They are the lifeline to Iowans' ability to access quality care and support, and vital to both rural and urban communities and economies.

WE NEED THESE HARD-WORKING INDIVIDUALS — AND THEY NEED US!

Please support our work by donating today with a gift of \$25, \$50, \$100, or any amount. When you support Iowa CareGivers, you enable us to develop and deliver programs and services tailored to DCWs that help keep them in direct care longer. You help attract new people to the field and allow us to work with our partners to train and retain them. And you help us carry out our advocacy mission to promote and pass public policies that ensure direct care workers are highly valued, well-paid, well-educated, and respected.



"I see so much in-house training going on at facilities and when you leave you don't take those new credentials with you. You have to start all over and be retrained somewhere else. It would be awesome if you could put your in-house training on a database and be able to track it and carry it with you everywhere you go."

*—Michael Owens,
direct support professional*

In gratitude,

Di Findley,
Executive Director

HOW TO GIVE:

Mail to: Iowa CareGivers, 939 Office Park Rd. #332,
West Des Moines, IA 50265

Online: IowaCareGivers.org/donate

Venmo: @IowaCareGivers

Or scan QR code



P.S. WE'VE REDESIGNED OUR WEBSITE! *IowaCareGivers.org* now has improved navigation and a fresh look. Most importantly, we designed the site to be a better resource for caregivers and the community. Donation options have been expanded to include most credit cards, Apple Pay, and Venmo. **We hope you check it out soon!**

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