

# THE HUB

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

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR DIRECT CARE WORKERS TO VOTE IN THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS?

By Julie McMahon, Iowa CareGivers Consultant

With 2014 midterm elections quickly approaching (**November 4**), it is important that direct care workers understand the importance of voting for the candidates who know and understand issues facing direct care workers and want to do something about them! Election outcomes are determined by those who **VOTE!** Who we elect will impact not only you as direct care workers, but also the Iowans you serve. As we discussed in the last issue of The HUB, direct care workers need to become informed voters and make certain your profession's voice is heard in the upcoming election. Iowa CareGivers asked the candidates for Iowa Governor and all of the Iowa candidates for US Congress to respond to three questions:



Julie McMahon,  
Iowa CareGivers  
Consultant

1. Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?
2. If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?
3. Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?

*Direct care workers are defined as individuals who provide supportive services and care to people experiencing health conditions, illnesses, or disabilities and receive compensation for such services. They may work in home-based, community-based, or facility settings. They have many job titles, such as direct support professional, supported community living worker, home health aide, direct care worker, universal worker, and many more.*

Recognizing the candidates' busy schedules and in an attempt to get as many responses as possible, we extended the deadline several times. The purpose of the special edition of The HUB is to provide the responses we received so you can learn more about the candidates and how they might share some of your concerns. Candidate responses are printed exactly as they were submitted. Before you vote in the November election, think about the issues/problems that are important to you as a direct care worker and then look for candidates who share these concerns. We hope this will provide an additional opportunity to learn about the candidates and how they might share some of your concerns. If you're still not sure, 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! Take steps to make your vote count in November! Make up your mind now to vote on November 4, mark your calendar! Put it on your to-do list!



### REGISTER TO VOTE IF YOU AREN'T ALREADY REGISTERED.

Call your county auditor's office for information about voter registration or check out frequently asked questions about voter registration at Office of the Secretary of State:

[sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/regfaq.html](http://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/regfaq.html)

**VOTE NOW: Absentee Ballot:** You can order a voting ballot to be delivered to you so you don't have to go to the polls. It's quick and convenient. **Voting** is the most important thing we as citizens can do for our country..... and for direct care workers and our issues!



Other helpful voting information can be found at ID Action at [www.idaction.org/vote/five-easy-steps-to-voting/](http://www.idaction.org/vote/five-easy-steps-to-voting/)

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

If you are interested in receiving information about educational programs, topics in direct care, and other opportunities, **sign up NOW** with Iowa CareGivers. You can 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) or [bailey.phares@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:bailey.phares@iowacaregivers.org).

# CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF IOWA

**REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE**  
**Governor Terry E Branstad**

**RUNNING MATE:**  
*Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds*



**Governor**  
**Terry E. Branstad**

**Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?**

Four years ago, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds and I set ambitious goals to meet the changing needs of Iowa: 200,000 new jobs and a 25 percent increase in family incomes by 2015; reducing the size and cost of government by 15 percent and restoring Iowa's schools to best in the nation. Every day since being elected, I have worked to meet these goals for hardworking Iowa families. Our direct care workforce is seeing the changing face of Iowa, and Iowa healthcare, first hand. We must continue to empower and position Iowa's direct care workforce for 21st century careers in healthcare. But most importantly, we will continue working to increase family incomes and opportunities so Iowa families can grow and prosper in this state.

**If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?**

Iowa is facing a direct care workforce shortage. With an aging state, by 2020, Iowa needs to fill some 20,000 new direct care positions. Additionally, the healthcare delivery system is undergoing unprecedented changes. As Governor, I signed the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan into law. This Iowa alternative to Obamacare was a bi-partisan compromise that provides increased access to high quality, modern healthcare. I also championed Skilled Iowa, a unique opportunity that connects Iowans with training opportunities. As Governor, I will always work to maintain the valued quality of life in Iowa and strengthen opportunities for growth for Iowa families.

**Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?**

I would be honored and humbled to have your vote in November. Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, recipient of the Iowa CareGivers Association "From the Heart" award, has walked in the shoes of a caregiver. Together, we see Iowa ready to grow, prosper and build upon what is great about our state and our people. We will continue working to make a difference in the lives of everyday families as they pursue their dreams by working to make education more affordable, jobs more plentiful and government responsive to the needs of all citizens.



**Lt. Governor**  
**Kim Reynolds**

**DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE**  
**Senator Jack Hatch**

**RUNNING MATE:**  
*Monica Vernon*



**Senator**  
**Jack Hatch**

**Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?**

Direct care workers provide critically important services in both home and institutional settings. They are undervalued, underpaid and overworked. Our health care delivery system can be only as good as the people who work on the front line interacting with residents and patients. There's a shortage of workers especially in rural Iowa. Retention in the workforce is an issue. Access to quality training also is important.



**Monica Vernon**

**If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?**

I'll take the recommendations of the Direct Care Worker Advisory Council and the advice of the professionals who represent the Iowa CareGivers. I'll listen, meet with and involve individual direct care workers who want to continue the professionalization of this workforce and provide any support state government can to increase pay, advocate for more flexibility in the workplace and decrease burnout.

**Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?**

I'm a longstanding advocate of health care workers at all levels. I led the effort for state level health care reform in the legislature beginning in 2007. We brought all stakeholders together including direct care workers, to hear what we needed to do to modernize our health care system. I look forward to continuing that work as Governor.

## Third Party Candidates for Governor



**Jim Hennager**  
No response.



**Dr. Lee Hieb**  
No response.



**Jonathan Narcisse**  
No response.



## CANDIDATES FOR U.S. SENATE

### DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

#### *Congressman Bruce Braley*

#### **Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?**

Iowa's direct care workers provide high quality, personalized care to thousands of seniors and individuals with disabilities across the state. I believe direct care workers should be able to count on good jobs with good pay, as they take care of some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Specifically, we must find solutions to:

- The Care Gap, where projections show that there will not be enough direct care workers in the workforce to meet the growing demand of seniors and other patients in Iowa;
- The Education Gap, to ensure our workforce is trained and ready to provide the highest quality care;
- The Opportunity and Compensation Gap, to ensure that direct care workers have opportunities to advance and are paid a living wage with good benefits; and
- The Value Gap, whereby our direct care workers deserve recognition for the extremely valuable impact that they have on the lives of Iowa families.

These are all issues faced by Iowa's direct care workforce, and I'll work hard to make improvements in these areas.

#### **If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?**

I've proudly worked with Republicans, Democrats and Independents to find solutions to tough problems, and that's exactly how I'll tackle making sure that direct care workers have good jobs with good pay. First, I'll work to improve wages, as I have a history of fighting to make sure Iowa's workers are paid good wages. Second, access to healthcare is a top priority, and I'll work to continue the policies in place that have expanded the health care options for direct care workers and over a hundred thousand other Iowans. Third, I will continue to fight for policies which lower the cost of higher education, to make sure that those in the direct care workforce can afford to further their careers if they choose. Fourth, I'll work with community colleges and others to recruit and retain direct care workers, to help fix the Care Gap. Finally, I'll do everything I can to raise awareness about the amazing value that Iowa's direct care workers provide to seniors and families.

#### **Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?**

Having grown up in Brooklyn, IA, and worked my way through college and law school, I know how important it is to ensure that Iowans are able to put their skills to work in good-paying jobs. As a Member of Congress, I've worked in a bipartisan way to defend Medicare for Iowa seniors, increase Medicare reimbursements to Iowa providers, and increase wages for Iowa workers. I believe that we should promote policies that strengthen and expand the middle class, and help create the environment for job creation. Direct care workers are providing critical services to Iowans every single day, and are such important caregivers, and I'll fight to make sure that we're taking care of our caregivers.



**Congressman  
Bruce Braley**

### REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE

#### *Joni Ernst*

No response.



**Joni Ernst**

### THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE

#### *Douglas Butzier, MD, MBA*

Our sympathies to the family, friends, and colleagues of Dr. Butzier, who was recently killed in a plane crash.



**Douglas Butzier,  
MD, MBA**

### THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE

#### *Bob Quast*

No response.



**Bob Quast**

### THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE

#### *Rick Stewart*

No response.



**Rick Stewart**

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

## CANDIDATES FOR U.S. SENATE (CONTINUED)

### THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE *Ruth Smith*



*Ruth Smith*

#### Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?

In the past, I have owned and operated an elder group home and worked as a physical therapist in hospitals and long-term care facilities. From these experiences, I know firsthand the challenges of direct care workers. I can relate to the type of work and demanding work schedule. I am aware of the typical pay scale and benefits. And I understand the lack of respect they sometimes receive from healthcare professionals.

#### If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?

I would support an increase in minimum wages, including an annual inflation adjustment. I would support flexible working hours to accommodate family responsibilities. I would support adequate training for injury prevention. I would support the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). Generally, I would promote the importance of the direct care worker as a primary component of personal care for people of various disabilities.

#### Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?

I understand your job — I value your work — I can genuinely and passionately represent your issues and concerns.

## CANDIDATES FOR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE — DISTRICT 1

### REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE *Rod Blum*



*Rod Blum*

No response.

### DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE *Pat Murphy*



*Pat Murphy*

#### Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?

I see the biggest issue facing direct caregivers as having enough well trained and well educated direct care providers to meet the growing number of seniors in long term care facilities.

#### If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?

I will support legislation to create incentives for more people to go into direct care. We need to create more educational opportunities to have people who all qualified for direct care and direct care providers need to be better compensated for the work they do.

#### Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?

I was a direct care worker at Mercy Mental health from 1980-1984, so I have firsthand experience. Also my wife has been a nurse for over 35 years and so I understand the importance of direct care and how vital nurses are. I will take that knowledge and personal experience with me to Washington DC.



## CANDIDATES FOR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE — DISTRICT 2

### DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

#### ***Congressman David Loeb sack***

#### **Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?**

As the father of a nurse, I understand the important role that direct care workers play in our health care system. I am committed to ensuring that nurses, the largest single group of clinical health care professionals, have the resources necessary to deliver quality, effective health care.

This includes ensuring that direct care workers have safe working environments and fair workforce protections including minimum wage and overtime protections. Nurses work long, hard hours and deserve to be fairly compensated for their work. I also believe we must invest in quality nursing education programs to ensure that our patients receive the highest quality of care and to address the nursing shortage as our population ages. Additionally, I support policies that allow nurses to practice to the full scope of their licensure.

#### **If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?**

I will continue to advance a legislative agenda that supports direct care workers. During consideration of the ACA, I was successful in amending the bill to add provisions that take steps to address direct care workforce shortages through investments in long term caregiver workforce development. Going forward, I will work to strengthen these investments.

I am also a strong supporter of the Home Healthcare Planning and Improvement Act, which would allow nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, certified nurse midwives and physician assistants the ability to order home health care services through Medicare. This would improve continuity of care of Medicare patients.

I also support the Direct Care Job Quality Improvement Act, which would amend the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to include basic labor protections for home care workers, who are currently excluded from minimum wage and overtime protections.

#### **Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?**

As a member of the House Nursing Caucus, I have made it a priority to advocate for policies that support the direct care workforce. I will continue to support legislation that will support your ability to provide quality care to Iowans, strengthen labor and safety protections for direct care workers, and work to address the nursing shortage.

Further, as a member of the Rural Health Care Caucus, I will continue to work to ensure that all Iowans have access to high quality, affordable health care. This includes investments in improving care coordination and access to primary care, and a stronger emphasis on prevention and wellness. I will work to keep quality health care providers in Iowa as well as bring in new caregivers to Iowa.



***Congressman David Loeb sack***

### REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE

#### ***Mariannette Miller-Meeks***

#### **Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?**

Many of the issues facing direct care workers are similar to those affecting all of health care. Declining reimbursement for services which affects pay, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, the cost of education to acquire needed skills and the decline of employers willing to pay for education and training, and then an aging workforce not being replenished at the same time that the aged population is expanding with demand for increasing services.

#### **If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?**

Public-private partnerships that help to bring people into the workforce and attain necessary skills for entry, but even more importantly, those skills that allow them to advance in their career in direct care service environment. Online training that is inexpensive and readily available giving individuals flexibility with work and family responsibilities, addressing reimbursement issues that the home care industry is facing which press pay downward, and vocal acknowledgement and affirmation of the tremendous work provided by this workforce in a caring and compassionate manner.

#### **Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?**

Having begun my career volunteering in nursing homes and mental health facilities, then becoming a nurse prior to a physician has helped me to have profound respect for those who work delivering quality care at home or in an institution. With my mother's recent diagnosis of Alzheimer's, I rely on this individual to help our family navigate this challenge. Beginning with a respect for the profession, as well as the people within it, helps one to advocate on issues that face this particular segment of healthcare.



***Mariannette Miller-Meeks***



## CANDIDATES FOR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE — DISTRICT 3

### DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

#### *Staci Appel*

**Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?**

One of the largest challenges is demonstrating how direct care givers allow seniors to stay in their homes longer, and otherwise relieve the burden on families of costs for residential care. Beyond that, certainly that direct care workers are a specialized field, that requires specific training, certification and education.

**If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?**

First, I would recommend increasing Title VIII funding for programs that train certified nursing assistants. Unfortunately, Congress has not adequately funded these programs. Additionally, OSHA should have clearer standards for the manual lifting of patients to protect the high rate of direct care worker injuries.

**Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?**

Cuts to Medicare and Medicaid are one of the single biggest threats to direct care workers and our seniors. I will fight to keep the promise of these programs for current and future generations of recipients and those who care for them.



*Staci Appel*

### REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE

#### *David Young*

Direct care workers are vital to the long-term health care system and the patients receiving care. In general, the more direct care workers are enabled to care for patients, the lesser the need for institutional care. This provides patients with the freedom they deserve, and in many cases saves taxpayer and patient dollars, by preventing the need for institutional care.

Congress can ensure direct care workers receive the salaries they deserve by reimbursing providers adequately through Medicare and Medicaid. This will help ensure proper access to direct care workers. Additionally, the home and community-based services waiver in Medicaid should be valued and utilized so direct care workers are recognized within the valuable role they hold in the health care sector.

As Senator Grassley's Chief of Staff, I learned to listen to constituents and to always be accessible. I will always listen to Iowa's direct care workers and will gladly welcome and work with them on issues important to them before the federal government.



*David Young*

### THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE

#### *Ed Wright*

In the face of increasing numbers of disabled and elderly needing care, the pressure on Direct Care Workers will likely increase.

Increasing federal regulation will likely restrict where, when and how service can be provided while the demographic historically most populating the staff of service providers is shrinking in Iowa.

We must act to:

- Keep existing Direct Care Workers in the profession by improving training, compensation, benefits, and rewarding/ recognizing their dedicated service to our elderly and disabled.
- Improve effectiveness of their efforts by improving communications, scheduling and support activities.
- Encourage continuing development of technology and access to technical products to assist in Care delivery.

We must prevent well-intentioned regulators from overburdening Care providers with unproductive and unaffordable restrictions causing businesses to fail.

Direct Care Workers in Iowa's 3rd Congressional District should choose to build their own, sound businesses or work for other's sound business and practice the good judgment they have training and experience to deliver. They should be free of suffocating paperwork that keeps them distracted from properly attending their clientele. Direct Care workers should vote for Ed Wright who will stand up for their freedom to deliver great service and be rewarded fairly.



*Ed Wright*



*Bryan Jack Holder*

### THIRD PARTY CANDIDATE

#### *Bryan Jack Holder*

No response.



# CANDIDATES FOR U.S. REPRESENTATIVE — DISTRICT 4

## REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE *Congressman Steve King*



*Congressman Steve King*

**Based on your knowledge of direct care workers and the services they provide, what issues do you believe Iowa's direct care workers face?**

Iowans deserve quality health care and widespread access to care. Congress must help find ways to help increase the availability of healthcare access in America's rural communities. Direct care workers not only provide care to my constituents, but they are essential for the economic growth in our community. Congress must continue to find ways to help attract more direct care workers to our community.

**If elected, what do you plan to do to address issues faced by Iowa's direct care workers?**

Throughout my time in Congress I have been a strong supporter of legislation that provides critical funding for programs that support direct care workers, long-term care facilities, and hospice and palliative care. I will continue to support the legislation that is necessary to help preserve the role of direct care workers in Iowa.

**Why should I, as a direct care worker in Iowa, vote for you in November?**

I am a courageous, passionate straight shooter. I understand the issues that direct care workers face in Iowa's long-term care facilities, and I am strong enough to vote against legislation that could be harmful towards direct care and long term care.

## DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE *Jim Mowrer*



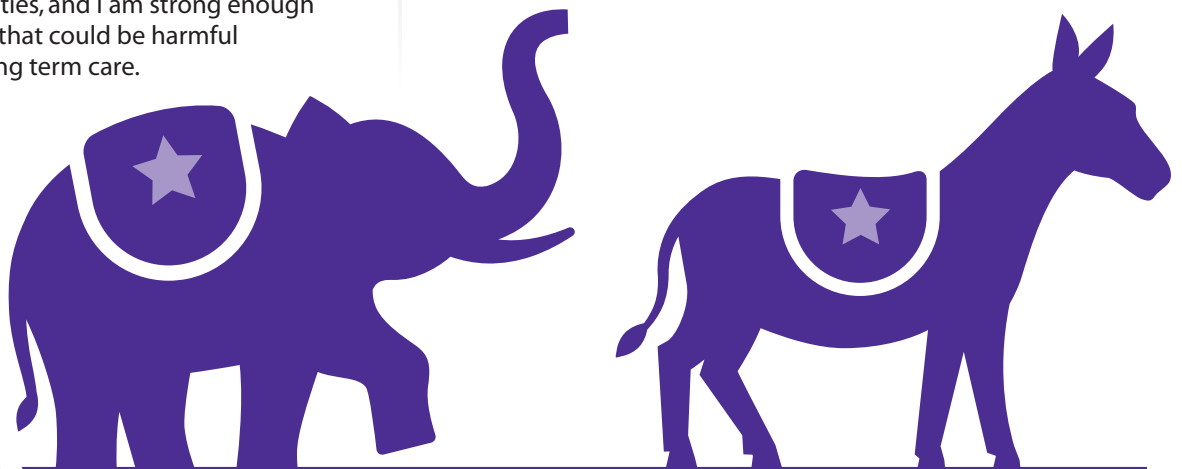
*Jim Mowrer*

No response.



**NOV. 4**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**VOTE**  
IT'S YOUR RIGHT!  
**IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!**  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★



*Register to Vote if you aren't already registered!*

## About Iowa CareGivers



**Iowa CareGivers** is an independent nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that exists to ensure that all Iowans receive good care and support when and where they need it. We do that by serving the needs of those who provide most of the hands on care and support...the direct care workforce.

**What is Unique About the Iowa CareGivers?** It genuinely cares about you, your work, your profession, your health, and your life. It respects you and the role you play in caring for and supporting aging Iowans and Iowans of all ages with a disability.

**To stay up-to-date on issues, events, and programs,** sign up to receive mailings and information from Iowa CareGivers. You can sign up by visiting the home page at [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org).

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NEWSLETTER  
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