

BUILDING A STRONG DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE



Those who provide direct care and support are in high demand and difficult to recruit and retain due to low wages. Also lacking is a state-based data base system which is needed to provide the foundation upon which to build a strong direct care workforce. Direct care workers (DCWs) have more than 30 titles; serve lowans of all ages and abilities and; work in people's homes, public health agencies, assisted living, nursing homes, hospices, group homes, hospitals and other locations. The workforce is predominantly female and their work is undervalued and stigmatized as "women's work" or "entry-level" work. While many licensed health professionals such as nurses, physician assistants, social workers, and others consider their work as a DCW as a pathway to their career, many more choose direct care work as their chosen career.

IOWA CAREGIVERS 2020 ISSUE PRIORITIES

1. ESTABLISH A DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE THAT SUPPORTS NEW AND EXISTING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES TO BUILD A STRONG DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE IN THESE OCCUPATIONS.

- Direct Care make up one of the highest demand and female dominated occupations and earn less than \$14 an hour on average
- A \$14 an hour minimum wage threshold for inclusion in the Future Ready Iowa Initiative makes many in these high demand occupations ineligible
- Turnover rates among these segments of the workforce are high

2. CREATE A STATE CENTRALIZED DIRECT CARE WORKER DATA BASE SYSTEM.

- Ensure accurate supply and demand data
- Determine the percentage of those continuing on a health career path and the percentage of those who choose direct care as a career
- Provide a permanent record of direct care workers' training, certifications, competencies, and specialty endorsements and provide portability
- Make on-boarding of these positions more efficient and less burdensome for both workers and employers
- Create system efficiencies and quality assurance (e.g. reducing costs and time commitment for repeat training; streamlining criminal background checks)

(over)



Iowa CareGivers

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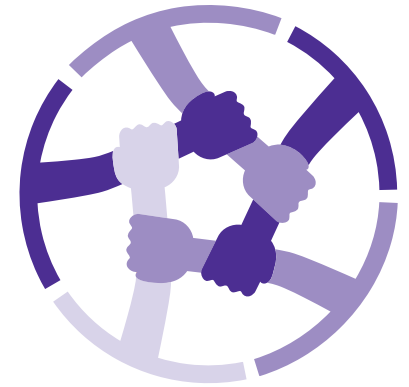
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3. ENSURE REIMBURSEMENT RATES THAT ALLOW FOR ADEQUATE STAFFING AND DIRECT CARE WORKER WAGES.

- Workers, employers, and consumers report **low wages as a barrier** to finding and keeping DCWs
- Median hourly wage is **\$13.80** with \$9.80 being the lowest hourly wage reported*
- **47%** live in households with a total household income below \$30K*
- **9.6%** are uninsured, a rate more than double the percentage of Iowa's total uninsured population*
- **54.2%** of their dependent children are on Hawk-I (children's health insurance program)*
- **DCWs rely on** child care subsidies, Medicaid/Iowa Wellness Program for their own health insurance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Earned Income Tax Credit, and other workforce support programs



4. OTHER

- Protect and increase access to critical workforce supports such as child care subsidies (HF771), supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), affordable housing, and access to affordable health care
 - Nearly 10% of direct care workers are uninsured, down from 23% in 2010, but still more than double the percentage of Iowa's total uninsured population of 4% (ACS) by the Kaiser Family Foundation)
 - 17% of DCWs receive SNAP benefits*
 - 6% of DCWs utilize a child care subsidy, but 22% are not sure what it is*
- Support initiatives that address challenges facing child care workers, another high demand, female dominated, low income workforce that experience similar challenges to those in direct care
- Support legislation that will enable registered dental hygienists to practice without location restrictions.

**Source: The 2019 Direct Care Worker Wage and Benefit Survey was conducted by Iowa Workforce Development under a contract with Iowa CareGivers.*

2019 DCW WAGE AND BENEFIT SURVEY AND OTHER RESOURCES CAN BE FOUND HERE: <http://bit.ly/2RXLj2Y>

- 2019 Direct Care Worker Wage and Benefit Survey
- Direct Care Workforce Central Data Base System Issue Paper
- Direct Care, Support, & Service Worker Survey (Employer Survey)
- Direct Care Workforce 2020 Executive Summary (From 13 Regional Listening Sessions)
- Direct Care Workforce Initiative Summit Report (2016 Iowa Department of Public Health)
- United Ways' Asset Limited Income Challenged Employed (ALICE) Report
- CNA 8 Hour Work Rule Changes – Good News Bad News!
- Federal Law Amendment for Direct Care Worker Continuing Education
- Direct CARE Opportunity Act (Federal Legislation Proposed)

VISION

A network of excellence in caregiving and support for all Iowans.

MISSION

To enhance the care and support of Iowans by providing education, research, recognition, and advocacy for those who provide direct care.

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