

Dear Friend,

When Cheryl got COVID-19, her face itched, her muscles ached, and her body burned at 102 degrees. She tested positive after work one day while caring for COVID-positive residents at a long-term care facility in Iowa. She drove home and closed the door to her bedroom to keep her toddlers out. Going to the doctor was out of the question. She didn't have the money.

Cheryl's story is not unique. Iowa's Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and other direct care workers (DCWs) have been overwhelmed for years by challenges arising from low wages and lack of adequate healthcare coverage. This year, COVID-19 has made their situation much worse. The pandemic has turned a difficult, under-compensated and often disrespected job into a life-threatening reality.



Perhaps you have a loved one who relies on healthcare workers like Cheryl. You need to be assured they can remain on the job. How? With adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing ... with a living wage ... with sufficient healthcare coverage.



Iowa CareGivers, as a leading advocate for DCWs, is working during the pandemic to address their concerns: adequate PPE for themselves, rapid onsite testing for them and the Iowans they serve, and ensuring healthcare coverage, hazard pay, paid sick leave, workers' compensation and childcare assistance.

While Cheryl lay in bed praying her family wouldn't catch COVID-19, she lost wages. Her husband stayed home to care for the children they couldn't afford to place in daycare. Together, their incomes barely cover rent, food and gas for the car. Now they were making nothing. And Cheryl was fighting a disease that had already taken the lives of 10 of the nursing home individuals she provided care for.

Cheryl's story is happening quietly all over Iowa, as 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 battle this horrible disease in homes, hospitals, hospices and assisted living facilities. Nationwide, more than 40 percent of coronavirus deaths are linked to nursing homes, both residents and workers.¹

What will you do when your caregivers get sick?

Whether in your home now — or in a care facility when you most need them — Iowa caregivers *show up every day to help keep you safe ...* and they put their own lives on the line to do so. They do so despite the burdens that overwhelm them, both on the job and at home.

They love the individuals they provide care for. But they are scared, and with good reason. COVID-19 cases continue to increase in Iowa. Healthy people are told to stay six feet from one another. To practice social distancing. *Trouble is, you cannot “social distance” while feeding, bathing, providing oral hygiene, transferring or comforting someone.*



Cheryl and other direct care workers need your help. Will you join Iowa CareGivers in ensuring they have the PPE, testing, wages, healthcare coverage and resources they need to help keep you and your loved ones safe?



“It still scares me,” Cheryl says two weeks after returning to her job. “I’m working again, but nobody knows if you can get it a second time. I give my kids and husband a hug and wonder if I am keeping them safe. People are dying. You see it every day. You worry so much. You don’t even have healthcare coverage. Everyone wonders, *How am I going to get care if I get sick?*”

Your gift to Iowa CareGivers supports the “Healthcare Heroes” we all value. It supports the people who really are on the front lines of this war. The people who are fighting with their very lives for you.



Use the enclosed envelope to join Iowa CareGivers in this critical work or donate online at: <https://bit.ly/2DvASif>

Yours in service,
Di Findley, Executive Director

P.S. Cheryl is not this caregiver’s real name. She was too afraid of losing her job to share it. She loves her job and loves the individuals she cares for. Unlike many of them, Cheryl survived her bout with COVID-19. But she’s still struggling to get caught up with her bills after unpaid sick time. Will you join the fight to ensure direct care workers like Cheryl receive the compensation and benefits they earn for serving you and your family in your time of need?

P.P.S. Your generosity supports Iowa CareGivers’ advocacy on the part of Iowa’s direct care workers. Together, we address such issues as establishing living wages and benefits and providing specialty education in such critical areas specific to COVID-19, as well as oral care and dementia. Your help will make a huge difference not only for Cheryl and her colleagues, but for you and your family when you need help and your entire community.

¹“More Than 40% of U.S. Coronavirus Deaths Are Linked to Nursing Homes,” New York Times, July 15, 2020.

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