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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Des Moines Conference Provides Support to State's Caregivers**  
*Opportunities for Education and Networking Encourage Workers to Remain in the Field*

(Des Moines, Iowa, August 20) —Iowa CareGiver's [25<sup>th</sup> annual statewide conference](#) will provide two days of educational sessions, networking, and professional development for direct care workers and those serving as family caregivers. *Caregiving: It's Universal* will be held at The Meadows Conference Center in Altoona on September 9 and 10. One-day registration is \$75 and two-day registration is \$105.

Direct care workers are certified nurse aides (CNAs) at nursing homes, personal care assistants or home health and hospice aides, direct support professionals, patient care technicians, and others who provide assistance to people who are sick, injured, mentally or physically disabled, or the elderly and fragile. They serve people of all ages and abilities. There are an estimated 60,000-65,000 direct care workers and over 300,000 family caregivers in Iowa.

Caregiving positions are in high demand and projected to grow, yet many communities face challenges in recruiting and retaining direct care and support staff. This creates concern and undue burden on family members of those who depend on direct care workers for the health and wellness of their loved ones.

This year's caregiving conference aims to address this issue head-on. "Eighty six percent of conference attendees say their attendance increases the likelihood they will continue working in the direct care field, and seventy-five percent indicate they will stay with their current employer," said Pam Biklen, Program Director of Iowa CareGivers. "One of the goals of the conference is to keep people in the field."

Attendees will hear from experts about hot topics in the caregiving, such as oral care, yoga, autism, medication aide update, communicating with families when a loved one is dying, honoring the choice of person's served, medical cannabidiol, skin and wound care, ALS, and active shooter response.

An important focus is on self-care. Paid and family caregivers often push their own needs aside while providing care or support to others, which contributes to burn out and low retention rates. Health screenings will also be offered. [A full conference agenda](#) is available online. Registration is open and the early bird deadline is Wednesday, August 28.

Opening and closing keynote presentations aim to engage and inspire. Author and motivational speaker [Candy Whirley](#) will open the conference with a humorous, high-energy keynote on personality types and



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how to work together with everyone. A closing keynote by motivational speaker [Dave Caperton](#) will focus on prioritizing self-care for caregivers.

A reception following the conference's first day will recognize central Iowan centenarians, people who are 100 years of age or older. Centenarians will be celebrated from 4 to 5:30pm on Monday, September 9 and KCCI TV8 Anchor Eric Hanson will emcee.

[Key conference sponsors](#) include the Iowa Insurance Division and UCS Healthcare. The centenarian reception is a partnership between Aging Resources, Iowa Department on Aging, and Iowa CareGivers with additional support from Wellmark BCBS and AARP Iowa.

[Iowa CareGivers](#) is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan statewide organization. It exists to ensure Iowans receive quality care and support when and where they need it through focusing on providing education, recognition, research and advocacy for those who provide direct care.

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