



Collaboration and partnerships between multiple stakeholders are required to implement SOLUTIONS to assure all Iowans have access to high quality care and support through a stable health and long-term service and support (LTSS) workforce inclusive of direct care workers and family caregivers.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- *Identify an entity to provide the “backbone” for addressing the direct care workforce challenges through a common agenda of assuring that all Iowans receive services when and where they need them.* The effort will also focus on the importance of the family caregiver network, as well as the overall economic impact of the issues.
- *Collect data and identify emerging trends relating to the direct care workforce in all settings, i.e.: disability, nursing homes and home/community based;* identify at a minimum, the current number of direct care workers in Iowa, diversity in the workforce, their employment settings, their current wages and benefits, and the types of services provided.
- *Inform public policy* about the current and future health and long-term care delivery system in Iowa, workforce barriers and challenges, and models of policies or initiatives that are working in Iowa and other states.

RECRUITMENT and RETENTION

- Distribute and provide technical support for *“The Toughest Job You’ll Ever Love”* tool-kit, and other resources, for use by educators, career counselors, workforce development staff, and others that encourage direct care as a worthy profession and career choice.
- *Identify, highlight and replicate “best practices”* used by health and long-term care providers to recruit and retain staff such as: assuring a positive workplace environment; making sure direct care workers are valued members of the care team; providing high quality orientation, mentoring and training programs; addressing diversity in the workforce; providing livable wages, family sustaining benefits including retirement, and workplace balance. (adequate levels of staff; flexible work schedules).
- *Expand financial support for programs and services that have been proven to help keep good people in the direct care workforce;* e.g. mentoring and recognition programs; education and training; leadership development programs; early retention intervention activities; linking workers to physical and financial wellness programs; and outreach efforts focused on expanding health care coverage for workers.
- *Invest in an infrastructure that will assure access to Prepare to Care, and other competency-based training,* track utilization of the curriculum, and ensure that direct care workers, employers, and consumers have access, through a central data base, to information related to a direct care worker’s training and credentials or certifications.

PUBLIC AWARENESS and ADVOCACY

- *Create a public education and recognition campaign* informing Iowans about who direct care workers are, what they do, their value to family caregivers, their impact on business and the economy, and why it’s important for all Iowans to care about recruiting and retaining a high quality direct care workforce.
- *Educate and inform policy-makers about issues and challenges impacting the direct care workforce;* encourage implementation of recommended strategies to address recruitment and retention of this high demand workforce.

EDUCATION and TRAINING

- *Implement consistent educational and continuing education standards*
 - Increase awareness of the state’s Prepare to Care training, including core, other modules, and specialty endorsements such as oral health/ Mouth Care Matters.
 - Create opportunities to specialize in oral care, end of life care, dementia care, mental health, multicultural health, children with special needs, and other areas.
 - Create career choices and training to prepare individuals to work in nursing homes, hospitals, hospices, in the homes of Iowans, or other community-based settings.
 - Embrace portability by eliminating barriers to workers moving from one care or support setting or work environment to another, instructor requirements, and 8-hour rule.

COMPENSATION – Wages and Benefits

- Ensure that direct care jobs become “good jobs”
 - *Determine current compensation ranges, including benefits, for direct care workers across all work settings.*
 - *Create incentives* such as tax credits for direct care workers and family caregivers, establish a direct care training fund, and investigate incentive models used in other states that *attract individuals interested in entering and staying in the direct care field.*

See Reverse Side





As part of the Direct Care Workforce Initiative, Iowa CareGivers hosted eleven (11) Direct Care Workforce 2020 Regional Listening Sessions across the state of Iowa during 2015 and 2016. Nearly two hundred (200) participated. They included nursing homes, home care and other community-based providers, hospitals, hospices, residential care facilities; and community colleges and their faculty who educate those in direct care. All the participants actively engaged in the Listening Sessions for the purpose of **Shaping Solutions for the Future: Direct Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention.**

There was consensus by all attending the Listening Sessions that the current system does not adequately support the needs of those routinely providing extensive help with daily activities, delivering complex medically-related services, and coordinating health care and long-term care. While there are some policy efforts and initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of caregivers and the ones they provide care for, there is a great deal of work yet to be done.

Participants shared “best practices” and strategies used to recruit and retain direct care workers. The “best practices” target many of the issues both employers and the direct care workforce identify as hiring and retention issues:

Compensation and Benefits	Thorough Orientation	Training – Access to Continuing Education/ Training (specialized) and Portability of Training/ Credentials Across All Settings
Workplace Environment	Mentoring and Role Modeling	Empowerment
Leadership Development	Employee Recognition	Advancement Opportunities/ Career Ladder
Scheduling – Reasonable Hours, Stability and Flexibility to Allow for Life Balance	Incentives	External Promotion; Public Education and Awareness of the Importance of Position

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