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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

New Survey of Health Care Workers Reveals How Many Are More Likely to Leave or Stay in the Field Due to Vaccine Mandates

Iowa CareGivers (IC) recently released a survey of direct care workers, nurses, and other health professionals revealing that the COVID-19 vaccine mandates may keep people in the field longer and while the survey doesn't dig deeply into why, we can assume that a safe work environment is important to them. This news could be a relief for those health care providers who imposed vaccine mandates before the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and had concerns about losing more staff. It is also counter to some industry reports that the mandates will only force more people from the field when they are already experiencing a tight labor market. "We can't afford to assume that the COVID-19 vaccine mandates are the singular cause of staff shortages without exploring other aspects of the shortages," said Maribel Slinde, Board Chair, Iowa CareGivers. "For example, many left the field early in the pandemic, before vaccines were available due to underlying health conditions, lack of personal protective equipment, fear of infecting an at-risk child or other family member with COVID-19, and burnout," she said. A significant number of survey respondents said they knew someone who had already left the field due to COVID, another important factor.

The key findings of the survey, completed by 318 respondents, are as follows:

- 46% knew someone who had left the field because of COVID-19.
- 49% are more likely to remain in the field because of the vaccine mandates.
- 18% are more likely to leave the field because of the vaccine mandates.
- 33% are unsure about whether they will remain in the field.
- 54% oppose the vaccine mandates.
- 35% support the vaccine mandates.
- 11% are unsure whether they support or oppose the vaccine mandate.

For decades, low wages, lack of health care coverage, paid leave and other benefits, and lack of portable credentials have contributed to high staff turnover. Industries such as retail, restaurants, and manufacturing have raised their starting hourly wage to \$18 to \$20 an hour. In 2019, the median hourly wage for direct care workers in Iowa was \$13.80 which has most likely increased since then but not enough to compete with other sectors. Laura Stein, CNA, and former IC Direct Care Council member has been on the frontlines of the pandemic for nearly two years and said, "With the outbreaks in nursing homes on the rise, we just can't do this again"!

The survey, conducted by Iowa CareGivers and in cooperation with the Iowa Nurses' Association can be found here [VaccineMandateSurvey](#)

