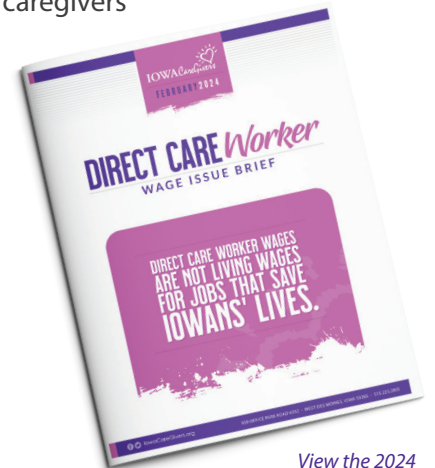


Iowa CareGivers 2024 *Issue Priorities*

2024 *Issue Priorities*

- 1. Increase wages for Direct Care Workers.** A median hourly wage of \$14.42 and wages that have remained stagnant since at least 2019 are barriers to the recruitment and retention of this vital workforce. These issues create a burden for consumers, family caregivers, and employers when Direct Care Workers are not there to ensure people receive the care and support they need. The business community is also impacted when their employees who have family caregiving responsibilities must reduce their hours or give up employment when Direct Care Workers are not there to fill the gaps which can impact businesses' productivity.
 - a.** Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for all providers that employ Direct Care Workers so they can pay higher wages and ensure the additional funding goes toward Direct Care Worker wages.
 - b.** Ensure people with disabilities who utilize waivers and employ their own caregivers are paid a Medicaid rate high enough to recruit and retain caregivers so they can remain in their own homes and communities.
- 2. Repeat the pre-COVID-19 Direct Care Workers of Iowa 2019 Wage and Benefit Survey conducted by Iowa Workforce Development in partnership with Iowa CareGivers.** The survey findings are reported by Direct Care Workers, which is a departure from the Department's standard wage data collection from employers of Direct Care Workers. The survey findings provide valuable demographic data as well as a look into how many Direct Care Workers depend on HAWK-I, the children's health insurance program; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); childcare subsidies; and other supports that enable them to work. A repeat of the survey would provide important comparison data to inform workforce policies and practices. You can find the 2019 Wage and Benefit Survey here: <https://bit.ly/48GAoP5>.
- 3. Require the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing to include the Direct Care Worker Registry in their plans to streamline licensing boards into a single system and the necessary funding to do so.** The streamlining of the boards is a recommendation of the Boards and Commissions Review Committee (BCRC) You can access the September 2023 final report and recommendations here: <https://bit.ly/3P8Aulu>. The purpose of the federally funded Iowa Direct Care Worker Registry is to maintain a list of Nurse Aides who have successfully completed the 75 hours of training to become certified, and to track abuse or misappropriation of nursing home residents' property. Direct Care Workers from all other settings are not on the Registry which creates significant burden to both workers and employers. Many licensed nurses, dental hygienists, physician assistants, dentists, doctors, therapists, mental health, and other health professionals begin their careers as nurse aides.



View the 2024 Direct Care Worker Wage Brief at: <https://bit.ly/49Gg15P>



Our Mission:

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



Continued →

Iowa CareGivers 2024 *Issue Priorities*

Making the Direct Care Worker Registry part of the larger licensing system currently being planned by the Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing is good policy and will provide:

- a. Portable credentials for Direct Care Workers making it easier for them to work in various locations and making onboarding of workers easier for employers, reducing the financial burden on both Direct Care Workers and employers.
- b. More accurate data on the numbers of Direct Care Workers in Iowa and an ability to track how many remain in the health professions, and of those who do, how many go on to become a licensed nurse, social worker, dental hygienist, physician, or other health and human service worker.
- c. Modernization and upgrades to the current infrastructure needed to support a strong and well-prepared direct care workforce.

Who Are Direct Care Workers?

- Direct Care Workers are Certified Nurse Aides; Home Health Aides; Personal Care Assistants; Direct Support Professionals; Adult Day Service Workers; Hospice Aides, Patient Care Technicians, and others.
- Direct Care Workers provide at least 80% of the direct hands-on care to Iowans of all ages and abilities.
- Direct Care Workers work in the homes of individuals served, public health entities, assisted living facilities, group homes, residential care facilities, nursing homes, hospices, and hospitals.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Iowa CareGivers

939 Office Park Road #332
West Des Moines, Iowa 50265
515-223-2805

information@iowacaregivers.org

IowaCareGivers.org