Each of us, in some way at some time, will have our lives touched by a paid direct caregiver. They may have already been needed, are needed now, or will be needed in the future…to assist and support a parent, spouse, child, sibling, friend, neighbor — or yourself.

When that happens, you’ll know how important the direct care workforce is, and will better understand how important the Iowa CareGivers work is.

WE ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT
Show your support for the work we do on behalf of aging Iowans, lowwans with disabilities, their families, and the paid direct caregivers that support them. Your contribution will support 1) high quality educational programs that increase the knowledge and skills of paid direct caregivers; and 2) advocacy that impacts policies that a) ensure the safety and well-being of you and your loved ones and b) encourage Iowans to become paid direct caregivers and make it a career.

Here’s how you can help:
- Make a financial contribution.
  - YES I WILL. Make checks payable to Iowa CareGivers or contribute online at www.iowacaregivers.org
  - Amount of Contribution $_________________

- YES I WILL. Please contact me about considering a larger gift in my will or estate plan.

My contribution is: □ In Honor of □ In Memory of

Full Name of Honoree or Memorial:

Mailing Address of Honoree or Family of Memorial: ____________________________________________

Name _____________________________________________________

Complete Home Mailing Address ____________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip ____________________________________________________________

County ____________________________________________________________

Phone (Home) ___________________ Phone (Work) ___________________

Phone (Cell) ____________________________________________________________

Email Address _______________________________________________ (Emails are not shared with others)

□ Please keep my contribution anonymous.

Your contribution may be tax deductible as prescribed by law. Donors will be listed in the Iowa CareGivers Annual Report unless otherwise instructed.

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“A fall from my roof while putting on Christmas lights left me paralyzed from the neck down. Thank goodness I had tremendously support and assistance from my mom, son, friends, and neighbors, but they can’t do it all. If it weren’t for the home care aides who assist me with the things that most take for granted… things like showering, shaving, and eating… I would probably be in an institution. It is important to me to know that there is an organization like the Iowa CareGivers that is devoted to serving the support, advocacy, and education needs of direct care workers…so they can be there for me and my family.”

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THINK
Think about how your day unfolds once you wake up. Think about the things you do every day that you take for granted. Think about two or three aspects of your life that you value most, and never want to be without.

IMAGINE
Imagine a completely different life; a life dictated by the realities of extended illness, disability, or advancing age. Imagine your life with the loss of those things that are most important to you. Imagine being unable to work, live, eat, sleep, bathe, go places, do things where, when, how and with whom you want. Imagine your life — or the life of a loved one — with the loss of privacy, dignity, and the basic need to be self-reliant and function independently.

IT’S A REALITY WE DON’T WANT TO THINK ABOUT
We come to rely on family members, neighbors and friends to do the things we want to do for and by ourselves. And when it happens, we struggle to understand and accept it.

OTHER REALITY
We come to rely on the paid direct care workforce to support us when family members and others cannot. We rely on people who are initially strangers — but who become like “family” — to lend a helping hand, an ear, or a shoulder.

THE ASSUMPTIONS WE MAKE
We assume that paid direct caregivers will be there for us when and where we need them, that they will be highly knowledgeable and skilled, and fully equipped to provide high quality care and services.

GUESS WHAT? THERE’S A “CARE GAP”!
The assumptions about the availability of paid direct caregivers are wrong. We have an emerging workforce crisis in Iowa, and throughout America, and it’s called the “Care Gap.” The “Care Gap,” described in the chart above is when the demand for paid direct caregivers exceeds the supply.

WHO’S LEADING THE EFFORT IN IOWA TO ADDRESS THE “CARE GAP”?
It’s the Iowa CareGivers. We create, provide, and support initiatives that recruit, educate, and retain paid direct caregivers, enable them to succeed in their profession, and provide high quality care and support to the Iowans they serve.
WHO ARE PAID DIRECT CAREGIVERS?
The paid direct caregivers provide about 80 percent of the hands-on care and support for lowans of all ages in all settings. They serve children and adults with disabilities; those with mental illness, Alzheimer’s disease, or brain injury; those recovering from acute illness, surgery, or injury; frail older lowans; and those at the end of life.

They go by many titles — certified nurse aide; home care and home care aide; personal care attendant; rehabilitation, medication and hospice aide; and direct support professional. They serve lowans in many locations: in their homes, assisted living and nursing facilities, adult day centers, hospitals, and residential facilities for people with disabilities.

HOW MANY DIRECT CARE WORKERS DO WE NEED?
Totaling over 70,000, direct care workers are Iowa’s largest occupation; larger than nurses, school teachers, and all public safety officers. Moreover, three of the top ten high-growth/high-demand jobs in the coming decade are in direct care.

Iowa will need 100 additional direct-care workers between 2017 and 2018 to meet the growing demand.

WHY ARE DIRECT CARE WORKERS SO HARD TO FIND, AND KEEP?
Direct care positions are among the most difficult to attract lowans to, and keep them in, due to low wages, lack of access to affordable health care coverage and other benefits, the physical and emotional demands of the work, and few opportunities for career advancement within the field of direct care.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO CHANGE THE PICTURE?
To produce the changes needed, we have to expand the public’s awareness of the issues and the challenges.

Here are the misconceptions that got us here — the thinking that said direct care:
• Is entry-level work that no one should plan to do for a career
• Is low-skilled work that anyone can do
• Will be a job that people will always be lining up to do
• Can be provided based on business models and governmental policies built on low investment in the workforce, high levels of employee turnover, and lower quality of care and services
• Is a calling and not an occupation
• Is women’s work

THIS THINKING HELPED TO CREATE THE “CARE GAP.” IT’S OUR GOAL TO HELP CHANGE THAT THINKING SO IOWA AND AMERICA CAN SUCCESSFULLY ADDRESS THE “CARE GAP.”

SO…WHAT IF WE DO NOTHING?
Maintaining the status quo is always an option. But if we choose to continue doing what we’ve always done, we need to understand that the results will be what no one wants … less care and fewer services, delayed care and services, and less quality care and services.

Not just for someone else, but for you and those dear to you.

ABOUT THE IOWA CAREGIVERS
The Iowa CareGivers exists to ensure that lowans get excellent care and support when and where they need it. To get that, lowans need to have a direct care workforce that is well educated, skilled, and readily available.

The Iowa CareGivers is the first, and sole organization in Iowa that is focused on the entire direct care workforce and the care and support they provide to lowans. We are recognized nationally for our work and impact.

We provide education to paid direct caregivers. We recognize them. We conduct research about them. And we advocate for and with them — along with families and others that know how important they are.

We also work to better inform the general public, and to help them understand that direct care workforce issues are not just about workers; they’re also about them — their friends, neighbors and families and whether the services they want and expect will be there for them when and where needed.

The Iowa CareGivers is a leader. We are an agent of change. We want Iowa to be the state that the rest of the nation looks to as the example on direct care workforce issues.

COLLABORATION IS KEY
We recognize the need for and value of collaboration. We work closely with family caregivers, consumer groups, citizens, advocates for seniors and people with disabilities, community colleges, government agencies, employers, and many others to identify and address the challenges that exist.

WHAT WE BELIEVE
It’s our belief that every lowan, regardless of their age, their health, where they live or where they receive services, should expect and receive excellent care and services. Everytime. All the time.

Unfortunately, lowans can’t be assured of that, but they can and should. We’re using our time, talent and energy to make that a reality.

“We simply can’t operate without direct care staff. The Iowa CareGivers is a vital education, support, networking, and advocacy resource for us and the direct care staff we employ. Iowa CareGivers has been a leader in not only bringing direct care workforce issues and challenges to the forefront, but also in finding and implementing solutions to help recruit, build, and retain this workforce.”
Alexa Mayner, Chief Operating Officer of ABCM Corporation, Hampton, IA

“Iowa CareGivers is a big reason why I’ve stayed in this profession.”
Anthony C. Wells, Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Hospice and Palliative Nursing Assistant & Mentor, Hartley, Iowa

“Direct care workers dress, feed, bathe, give medication to and help meet our daughter, Rachel’s, most basic needs. They help lift the burden of caring for a child with special needs. Without direct care workers to help, Rachel would be in an institution.”
Jim Pender, Family Caregiver, Des Moines, Iowa

Every day of her nine years in a care facility, my mother was moved, fed, dressed and calmed by competent, empathic workers who were equally compassionate to my devastated father. We support Iowa CareGivers work, because it recognizes the critical value of a direct care workforce that joins families in bringing dignity and reassurance to those we love.
Colleen and Bob Jolly, Ames
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