

## HELP IS NO LONGER JUST WANTED BUT FOR MANY DESPERATELY NEEDED!

### *LIVES OF ALL IOWANS ARE IMPACTED BY THE DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE\* – Directly or Indirectly*

ALL Iowans are touched by this workforce including more than 500,000 who are age 65 and older; thousands of children and adults under the age of 65; those who receive care in hospitals for illness or injury, assisted living and nursing facilities, and in their own homes; and those facing the end of their lives in hospice settings. Caregivers include more than 300,000 family caregivers and an estimated 70,000 direct care workers (DCWs) who earn \$9 to \$13.50 per hour, much of which is Medicaid funded. Also affected is the business community when family caregivers are forced to cut back hours at work or give up employment to care for a loved one. When workers aren't there to fill the gaps they place their own financial security at risk. Finally, there are an estimated 3,434 health and long-term service and support (LTSS) locations that can't operate without this vital workforce. (Source: Iowa Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program). Our recommendations for Solutions are below:



## STRONG SOLUTIONS TO THE DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

### *NEED IS PRESSING — TIME TO SOLVE IS SHORT*

The circumstances are now dire for many Iowans. The following solutions have been vetted by direct care workers, health and LTSS employers, advocates, and community college representatives. Taking action to support the proposed solutions will better prepare a stable health and LTSS workforce that is critical to Iowans of all ages and abilities and our state overall.

### *IOWA HAS LED IN ADDRESSING THESE COMPLEX ISSUES — POLICY IS NOW NEEDED TO ADOPT SOLUTIONS*

These direct care workforce initiatives must be supported in legislation and other workforce initiatives such as Future Ready Iowa.

- 1. Education and Training of the Direct Care Workforce** — Ensuring the State has competency-based, portable training, and that direct care workers (DCWs) are “Prepared to Care” in all settings where they provide service to Iowans;
- 2. A Central Direct Care Workforce Database System** — Expanding the existing Direct Care Worker Registry will provide the infrastructure needed to ensure training portability and maintenance of accurate data that will align with various state and federal workforce pipeline initiatives. It will help to ensure that workers, employers, and consumers have access to information related to DCW training and credentials;
- 3. Ensure that Direct Care Jobs Are Good Jobs** — Convening a multi-stakeholder interim legislative committee to explore ways to increase DCW compensation.
- 4. Continue and Advance Existing Direct Care Workforce Recruitment and Retention Initiatives**

## OTHER POLICIES TO CONSIDER:

- Expand forgivable loans, scholarships, and incentives for high-demand healthcare occupations such as mental health workers, psychiatrists, faculty nurses, therapists, and others.
- Support needed regulation such as eliminating barriers to workers moving from one care or support setting or work environment to another.
- Increase in the minimum wage that assures other needed benefits are not lost (e.g. child care subsidy)
- Explore strategies to boost family caregiver supports via tax credits or other incentives and options.

\*The direct care workforce is made up of Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs); Home Care, Hospice, Rehabilitation, Medication, Psychiatric, and Dietary Aides; Personal Care Assistants, Direct Support Professionals; and Patient Care Technicians (hospital aides); and non-medical companion/helper services to name a few.

### For more information contact Iowa CareGivers:

939 Office Park Road #332 • West Des Moines, IA 50265 Phone: (515) 223-2805  
Fax: (515) 226-3214 • [information@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:information@iowacaregivers.org) • [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org)