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## Turnover Rate in Direct Care Workforce Costs Iowa Employers Millions

*New report estimates turnover cost \$117 million in 2010*

Turnover among Iowa direct care professionals, the state's largest workforce, cost employers an estimated \$117 million last year, according to a new report.

The Iowa Direct Care Worker Advisory Council released the 2010 turnover figures for direct care professionals, workers who provide support and health services to people in long-term care facilities and a range of home and community-based settings.

"Direct care professionals are the front-line providers of essential care and support for Iowans who are aging or experiencing illness or disability," said Erin Drinnin, IDPH project manager for the Direct Care Workforce Initiative. "Employers, direct care professionals and others are working together through the Iowa Direct Care Worker Advisory Council to address turnover and improve retention rates, which are also a problem nationwide."

The direct costs to employers include out-of-pocket expenses to replace an employee, such as recruiting, advertising, screening, and training the new worker, as well as covering the additional staff hours or temporary workers needed during the vacancy.

"Our goal is to employ direct care professionals who are passionate and effective in meeting the needs of the people they serve," said Linda Matkovich, CEO of H.O.P.E., a Des Moines-based provider of support for individuals with disabilities. "The high rate of turnover among direct care professionals impacts the quality of services we can provide, because it keeps employers in a constant cycle of hiring and training new workers and prevents the development of crucial relationships between workers and persons served."

Estimated at between 47,000 and 52,000 workers, direct care professionals are Iowa's largest workforce – and demand for them is growing. Iowa Workforce Development, which assisted the Council in assessing workforce size and turnover, estimates an additional 11,000 direct care professionals are needed by 2018 to meet the demand for services, and home health aides and personal and home care aides are the first and third fastest-growing occupations in Iowa. Turnover cost is expected to continue rising each year to an estimated \$148 million by 2014.

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The report shows that millions of dollars could be saved by stabilizing the workforce. The Iowa Direct Care Workforce Initiative is addressing that need through education standards and professional advancement to ensure a qualified and stable direct care workforce in Iowa.

IDPH is currently conducting a pilot project of the training and credentialing recommendations of the legislatively directed Direct Care Worker Advisory Council. For more information about the Initiative, and to see the report on direct care worker turnover, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/directcare/](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/directcare/).

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