

Delivering information to those at the center of quality care

Iowa CareGivers Annual Educational Conference for Direct Care Workers: Theme Announced



Every year the Iowa CareGivers Association develops our annual educational conference around a fun theme. The theme is used to enhance the overall conference experience and make learning more enjoyable. This year's theme "brings out the star treatment" for direct care workers with "Red Carpet Care."

You exist to ensure that "Red Carpet Care" is provided to all Iowans in need through your "star-studded performances" every day. The "reviews" are in and you deserve a "5 star rating" for the quality of care and support you give. You've made the "cut" and now it is time to join us at the Iowa CareGivers Association conference, where you can be a part of some "premier" educational workshops, "dazzling" keynote presentations, and "action-packed" networking.

We're "rolling out the red carpet" for Iowa's direct care workers who play "leading roles" in quality care and support. Don't miss out on this once in a lifetime "production." You can be a part of it all by responding to this "casting call" for "Red Carpet Care" conference participants. Registration materials will be available in early summer.

Look for workshops on these topics:

mental health • care of chronically ill • infection control • foot care • stress management • Alzheimer's Disease • wound care • difference in disabilities • New Direct Care Worker educational standards and opportunities • oral care • domestic violence • personal finance • tai chi • self care • brain injury • and many others.

Monday, August 29 and Tuesday, August 30, 2011

Pre-conference session: Sunday, August 28, 2011

Conference Location: Sheraton West Des Moines, 1800 50th St., West Des Moines

If you are interested in becoming a "Red Carpet Care" Sponsor, please check our website www.iowacaregivers.org or call our office at 515.223.2805.

Senator Danielson Walks in the Shoes of Direct Care Workers at Harmony House

"The Kelly's of the world need to have their stories told."



Pictured above (L to R): (Standing) Senator Jeff Danielson, Scott Bonney, and Kelly Stokes, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Harmony House

See page 10 for more.

Registration Open for Iowa CareGivers Association's "A Call to Leadership" Program.

See page 3 for more.

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Stay Informed! If you are interested in receiving information about educational programs, topics in direct care, and other opportunities, **register NOW** with the Iowa CareGivers Association Resource & Outreach Center (ROC). You can complete the registration form on our website at www.iowacaregivers.org or you may request a form be mailed to you by calling 515.223.1721 or emailing georgeanna.spagnola@iowacaregivers.org.

11th Annual Celebrate Direct
Caregivers Conference

**BRING YOUR A-GAME TO
EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR
CAREGIVING**

Tuesday, June 21, 2011

Registration 9:30 a.m.

10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

114-119 Bldg A, Northwest Iowa
Community College

Fee: \$20

4.5 CEHs

For more information:

Marilyn Stille,

1-800-352-4907 Ext. 143

*Iowa CareGivers Association is proud
to help sponsor this event.*

“A Call to Leadership”: Registration Open

The Iowa CareGivers Association (ICA) “A Call to Leadership: A Direct Care Worker’s Guide to Leadership” program is a one-day educational program for direct care workers held every year at multiple locations in the state. It encourages direct care workers to think more broadly about leadership outside of the workplace, professionalism, and how to become a spokesperson and role model for the direct care profession. Graduates receive a certificate and a class pin. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Program is made possible through an Iowa Department of Public Health contract.

[2011 Leadership Program Schedule](#)
[All Programs: 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.](#)

How to Register:

You can register at www.iowacaregivers.org by completing the online form.

You can download the brochure and registration form from the website, complete the form, and either mail it to Iowa CareGivers Association (ICA) or fax it to 515.226.3214. Or you can call the ICA at 515.223.1721 to request a brochure or register by phone.

Save the following dates:

- Tuesday, June 7, 2011: Fort Dodge
- Tuesday, June 14, 2011: Mason City
- Wednesday, June 15, 2011: Ankeny
- Tuesday, June 21, 2011: Ottumwa
- Tuesday, June 28, 2011: Dubuque

BMI...Oh Me-Oh My! *by Laura Delaney, PA-C, Des Moines University*

Spring in Iowa is great! It is a time to re-energize and take a fresh look at our overall self. Are you feeling the best you possibly can? Are you taking care of YOU?

Today I want to address weight health. Being overweight can be a prediction of our susceptibility to certain diseases. Body Mass Index (BMI) is a calculation determined by using weight and height to calculate a number (BMI). According to obesity specialists, “This number is intended to help track changes in health and nutrition of the general population.”

“The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is defining obesity and overweight as the labels for ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. The BMI is not a direct measure of body fat, but a correlation with amount of body fat for most people.

An adult who has a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight.
An adult who has a BMI of 30 or higher is considered obese.”

Of course, there are flaws that have been identified with this way of measuring and there are other more accurate ways to measure body fat. The bottom line is being overweight has consequences and the more weight one carries the greater the risk of health related problems as stated by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Look around and you will see the need to address the obesity epidemic. The CDC reports, “more than one third of U.S. adults – more than 72 million- people and 17% of U.S. children are obese. Obesity has physical, psychological and social consequences for adults and children.”

The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute along with the CDC states, “The consequences of being obese have been related to coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancers, high blood pressure, dyslipidemia (high triglyceride levels), stroke, liver and gallbladder disease, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, degeneration of cartilage and underlying bone within a joint (osteoarthritis), and reproductive health complications. American people spend a lot of money on obesity –related medical care costs. The American society has been characterized by environments that promote physical inactivity and increased consumption of unhealthy food.” Innovative partnerships with the CDC are making progress in addressing the obesity epidemic.

Yeah for us!! But we do not have to wait for someone to tell us to get up, get moving and make healthy eating choices. The partnership to better health starts with us as individuals. Your BMI, at this point gives you a relationship to how much work you have to do. Every pound dropped makes a difference for the better. There is not one person which will not benefit from a healthier life style.

To calculate your BMI, this is the formula: weight in pounds divided by height in inches divided by height in inches again X 703.

If math is not your thing, there are Charts and BMI calculators available online. As health care professionals we need to take action! What better place to start than with ourselves. For further information go to:
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/recommen.htm
<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/defining.html>

Des Moines University will be providing health screenings at our annual conference August 29-30, 2011.

Iowa CareGivers Association Regional Conference Highlights

312 direct care workers attended the recently held direct care worker regional educational conferences at four locations: Fort Dodge, Mason City, Ottumwa, and Dubuque.



3 P's in a Pod
Professional. Personal. Peer.



Regional Conference attendees respond to the statement:
I love being a direct care worker because...

"The people I take care of are very special and appreciate what I do and it is the most rewarding job ever". (Marchita Thomas)

"I get the privilege of meeting such interesting people". (Jennifer Reid)

"I help people stay in their homes, help them feel better by doing the things they can no longer do". (Jannelle VanderKamp)

"It gives me great satisfaction to help people. It satisfies my soul". (Sheryl Brewer)

"I get to know people from all walks of life and know their stories". (Brenda Lanferman)



To view more photos from the regional conferences, please visit the photo gallery posted on the ICA website: www.iowacaregivers.org.

Farewell to Heidee



After being a part of the Iowa CareGivers Association team for 8 years, Heidee Barrett-McConnell, Education and Community Outreach Specialist, is leaving to explore new opportunities in supporting direct care workers. We wish her the very best. She will be missed.

I would like to thank Heidee for everything she has done for Iowa CareGivers and direct care workers. She will be missed alot by many people. She has been a great role model for me and many others. I wish her the very best. Her new job is very blessed to have a great person working for them!!!

Tracy Hoveland, CNA, on behalf of the ICA Direct Care Worker Leadership Council





Di Findley,
Executive Director

Cut Some Slack to Direct Care Workers Serving on Councils, Task Forces and Committees

by Di Findley, Executive Director, Iowa CareGivers Association

The Iowa CareGivers Association takes pride in knowing that we have helped create many opportunities for direct care workers to serve on various state councils, task forces, and committees. Some have been appointed by Governors. For many, this is a first time experience and can be a bit overwhelming.

Unlike many of those who are typically at the table...various association, state department, and other representatives...direct care workers don't know all the players, the politics, or agendas. We have encouraged workers to attend the meetings on their own behalf and share their thoughts from their perspectives. But it takes time to muster the courage to speak up.

It was brought to my attention recently that some have criticized direct care workers who are appointed or assigned to these various task forces/councils because they sometimes can't attend, or that they don't speak up enough.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind those interested that unlike the direct care workers serving, most people who participate in these task forces/councils are there as part of their jobs and are being compensated. They are individuals who are experienced and have no problem finding the courage to speak up. And, in most instances, their work schedules are flexible, and absence from work doesn't directly impact the care and support of another individual.

Direct care workers on the other hand, are often there on their own time and in some cases use vacation days. In fact, in one instance a worker used up all her vacation time. Even when ICA provides a modest payment to workers to offset the loss of wages, often their time away from work still counts as an absence. In addition, their jobs are demanding and it is difficult to get time off work even if a meeting is scheduled two or three months in advance. If they are short staffed on the day of the meeting, it is quite likely that the welfare of those they serve will take priority over attendance at a task force or council meeting.

I doubt that many of those who traditionally take part in these important meetings would do so if it created a financial hardship or if they had to use earned paid time off.

I urge you to cut direct care workers some slack and take the time to understand where they are coming from before criticizing them. **The state should compensate participants for their time and travel if they are not compensated in some other way, and employers should approve workers' time away from work without penalizing them for their absence.**

WE APPLAUD THE EMPLOYERS WHO SUPPORT WORKER INVOLVEMENT AND VALUE THE PERSPECTIVE THEY BRING TO THE TABLE.

Confusion About Iowa CareGivers Association and Other Like-Organizations

Several direct care workers and employers have admitted that they are confused about the difference between Iowa CareGivers Association and other like-organizations.

Iowa CareGivers Association is a grassroots, home grown, Iowa-based organization founded by a former nurse aide. Iowa CareGivers has a 20 year history of providing quality education, recognition, advocacy, and research in support of direct care workers. We serve direct care workers who work in all different health and long term care settings. The Iowa CareGivers also has a long history of bringing many different groups together around direct care workforce issues.

We are "independent" which means we are NOT paid or financially supported by any other large corporation, organization, employer trade association, university or other agencies. This is important, because if we did not agree with a group that was giving us lots of money on some issue...it would be more difficult to challenge that group on an issue without risking losing funding. Most of our funding has come from state and federal contracts, private foundation grants, and individual contributions.

If seeking Iowa CareGivers Association programs, please look for the Iowa CareGivers Association Logo That should also help to separate us from like-organizations.

Finally, if you are a direct care worker and have been told by anyone that you can't participate in Iowa CareGivers Association programs, you should contact us immediately. In the end, you should have the right to support or become involved with any organization of your choice. You can participate in one or all organizations and the programs they offer. But the choice should be YOURS!



Please call me if you have any questions. 515-225-2294

My best,
Di

"Happy Belated Nurses Week" to all of the licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and all other licensed nurses who help to teach and mentor direct care workers. Thanks for your role in providing the best quality care to lowans. Nurse's Week was May 6 - 12, 2011.

Direct Care Workers/Professionals Leading the Way to Professional Status!

These direct care workers/professionals have served or are currently serving on the Direct Care Worker Task Force. The task force, now called the Direct Care Worker Advisory Council, has been meeting for about four years. They are working on a new system that will establish a State Board of Direct Care Workers. It will streamline the educational standards and provide credit for experienced workers. We thank all of these individuals for the commitment they've made.



Kealy Andersen

Kealy Andersen has worked 7 years in direct care in various settings such as assisted living, residential care, hospital, and home health. Kealy says, "I enjoyed working on the Task Force & Advisory Council. You felt like you were making a difference and helping others." Kealy goes on to say, "I think it will greatly increase workers education and will be very universal in diverse working environments. One can never learn too much. It will prepare you for any job in the field and will help you assist any situation you might encounter."



Vicky Garske

Vicky Garske currently works as a CMA, RTW at the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown. She has worked in long term care and has done some in home care. She has primarily worked with the elderly and veterans. Vicky states, "To me serving on the Direct Care Worker Task Force/Advisory Council means that as a direct care worker, people are hearing, on a personal level, what direct care workers want and need to be the best that we can be." Vicky also says of the work of the Advisory Council, "I think it is going to be a good thing for all direct care workers. It will create a more professional look to the jobs that we choose to do. I also feel the rest of the country will be watching and following Iowa and the work and recommendations of this Advisory Council."



Diane Frerichs

Diane Frerichs is currently an RNA, CNA and Mentor at Estherville Good Samaritan Society. She has worked in direct care for 25 years in primarily the nursing home setting. Diane says, "It was very cool to represent direct care workers (on the task force) and to learn to become a voice for all direct care workers promoting the best possible care for all Iowans." She goes on to say, "I truly love what I do, I have met so many interesting people and their families. God has truly blessed me with the best profession possible. And we are also blessed to have ICA to advocate for us."



Lin Salasberry

Lin is currently a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at a Des Moines affordable assisted living residence. In the past, she has worked in hospitals, nursing homes, and acute rehabilitation settings. Lin says, "I have the honor of serving with those that have the power to bring about change. Through me, they hear about the lives, challenges, and needs of the direct care worker. I am able to share, through personal stories, the obstacles as well as be an active part of the discussions for possible solutions. Because of the direct care workers serving on this committee, it's not just a report people read – it now has the face of an actual DCW."



Anthony (Tony) Wells

Tony currently works as a CNA/Certified Hospice & Palliative Nursing Assistant at Sibley Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Northwest Iowa. He has worked in direct care for 24 years in a variety of settings, including nursing home, hospital, home health, and an AIDS/HIV Specialty Home. Tony says, "Being on the Advisory Council allows me to be an active, positive voice of change for the future of Direct Care Professionals." He believes that standardized education and training and access to specialty training is important for Direct Care Professionals and will help bring pride to the profession.

Not pictured: Jan Mosley, Matthew Clevenger, and Terrance Major

How Direct Care Workers Will Benefit from Standardized Education and Training

By Lin Salasberry, Certified Nursing Assistant

Not only do Direct Care Workers (DCWs) go by over 40 different job titles, but they also have various hours and places of training. DCWs today are responsible for so much more than basic activities of daily living. People talk a lot about quality care – that can only happen if each DCW has an equally qualified co-worker who is there because they want to be. I believe this only happens when DCWs feel confident in their skills and are offered ongoing quality educational opportunities

Some people are truly happy working with the elderly but there are those that discover they are not. The new curriculum has been designed to share insight into the many different fields of care and the types of consumers served. I believe it will help in addressing the DCW shortage and improve retention rates.

Congratulations to Direct Care Worker/Professional Education Review Committee Members

I am pleased to introduce you to the members of the new Direct Care Worker/Professional Education Review Committee! This committee is important because it ensures that people working in the field of direct care are leading the changes in their profession. The Education Review Committee will serve as an advisory group to a team of people that are developing curriculum and competencies for the new Direct Care Career Pathways.

The Pathways were developed by a group of experts, including direct care workers, at the direction of the Iowa Legislature and in partnership with the Iowa Department of Public Health.

I am amazed and excited about the talent and experience that these six individuals will bring to the work. I want to congratulate and thank them for taking the leap to do this!

And I want to thank all who submitted an application and those who make an effort every day to 'go the extra mile' and make a difference in your profession. We need all of your participation and input – we can't do this without you!

Erin Drinnin

Project Manager
Direct Care Workforce Initiative
Bureau of Oral and Health Delivery Systems
Iowa Department of Public Health
321 East 12th St., 4th Floor
Lucas Building
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-281-3166
1-800-308-5986
Erin.Drinnin@idph.iowa.gov



Erin Drinnin is pictured here with Fran Mancl, member of the DCW Education Review Committee, at one of ICA's recent regional conferences.

State Selects First Direct Care Worker/Professional Education Review Committee

Direct Care Workers/Professionals will, for the first time, play a key role in what the future content of the Direct Care Worker education standards will be in Iowa. Congratulations to the following who have been selected to serve on this committee.



Connie Brennan

Connie is a Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse Aide at HCI Care Services in Des Moines (formerly Hospice of Central Iowa), where she has worked since 1993. In 2004, she was presented the very first National Certified Hospice & Palliative Nursing Assistant of the year award by the National Board for Certification of Hospice & Palliative Nurses. With 30 years' experience as a CNA, Connie became a committee member because she believes that the bar for all aides needs to be drastically improved. Connie says, "I believe that with high standard credentials, we will draw high quality workers who will be proud of what they do and we all (patients, families, workers, and employers) will benefit."



Becky Johnson

Becky has 10 years' home health experience and 30 years total direct care experience. She is currently a Home Care Aide III at Mitchell County Home Health Care/Public Health in Northeast Iowa, where she is a mentor to many of her co-workers. Becky also serves on the Iowa CareGivers Association's Leadership Council. Says Becky, "I'm so honored and excited to be part of the Committee. I hope that through my years of experience I can provide valuable input as we develop the standard credentials and curriculum for the direct care profession."



Stephanie Lange

Stephanie, who is from Dubuque, is a Caseworker for Lutheran Services in Iowa. She provides supports to children who are non-verbal or developmentally delayed and also works with persons who have severe autism or who are behaviorally challenging. Stephanie has a 2-year Associate of Arts Degree in Early Childhood and a 4-year Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Work. Stephanie's agency encouraged her to apply for the Committee. She believes one of the Committee's greatest challenges will be changing the thought that direct care is "only" direct care and creating a value for direct care. Says Stephanie, "After all, if not for the direct care workers, who would provide the very needed services for the people we work with?"



Fran Mancl

Fran has been involved in human services all of his adult life. For the past 15 ½ years, Fran has been employed as a CNA at Stonehill Franciscan Services in Dubuque. Fran has 11 years' experience as a CNA Mentor and has been responsible for helping new CNAs learn about residents and their individual needs, activities, and behaviors. He provides training and orientation to new CNAs and assists with updating the Care Center's mentor training manual. Fran has a BA in English Literature and a Master's of Divinity degree. He has a love and desire for direct caregiving and for offering support to his co-workers. Fran says, "I feel I can offer a male caregiver voice and perspective on the Committee and thus enrich the Committee's efforts and outcome."

State Selects First Direct Care Worker/Professional Education Review Committee (cont.)



Scott McDowell

Scott, who is from Cedar Rapids, is a Direct Care Support Supervisor at REM Iowa Community Services. He supervises the Brain Injury Program and an MR house. Scott is currently enrolled to be a licensed pastor in the United Methodist Church. Says Scott, "My membership on the committee is an opportunity to be a voice for direct care workers and to improve training opportunities in the direct care field." Scott notes that getting everyone on board with the same standards will be an important accomplishment.



Cindy Ramer

Cindy accepted the challenge of becoming a committee member so as to give her input on the needs of direct care staff. Cindy says, "Getting the job needs of the different settings sorted out and determining the training needs for each setting will be a rewarding challenge." Cindy is from Northeast Iowa, where she is a Life Skills Coordinator/CNA at Harmony House Health Care, providing support for individuals with mental and physical disabilities. Cindy served on the Iowa CareGiver's Association's Leadership Council from 2004-2010 and in 2005, received the Iowa CareGiver's Association's Leadership Award.

New State Education Standards Would Eliminate Barriers for Home Care Aides

by Suzanne Zimmerman, Home Care Aide

I'm Suzanne and I've been a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) for 33 years. I work for Sac County Health Services which is located in Northwest Iowa. I started working in Home Care in 1991, at that time there was not an established license or registry for this profession. Currently there is not a way for me to become registered on the state's Direct Care Worker Registry. I have been working for 20 years in this position, however, I would be required to take the CNA test again and work one 8 hour shift at a Nursing home. This regulation is a barrier for Home Care Aides in the state. Home Care Aides need to be on the registry to ensure their future employment opportunities in other care settings. The duties of a Home Care Aide are the same as a CNA in the Hospital or Nursing Home but take place in the home setting. Home Care Aides receive competency testing of all their skills and receive close supervision by Registered Nurses.

I think the State is doing a wonderful job with establishing consistent education standards for all direct care workers in every setting, but we need to change the regulation to include Home Care Aides.

E-Updates are THE SOURCE for news on the Direct Care Workforce Initiative. These updates are the only source of news and information about the Direct Care Workforce Initiative to improve direct care worker training and education in Iowa. The Direct Care Workforce Initiative is led by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Stay informed about what the State is doing to address direct care workforce issues by signing up for the Direct Care Workforce Initiative E-Updates by contacting Jennifer Furler at jfurler@sppg.com.

Public Forum 2011: All Iowans Deserve Good Care & Support

Sherry Oswald, Certified Nursing Assistant, Dubuque, Iowa (pictured at right) Opened A Recent Public Forum Hosted by Iowa CareGivers Association and Featured Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds. Read Sherry's Comments Here...



Iowa CareGivers Association held a public forum in February 2011, "All Iowans Deserve Good Care and Support," featuring guest Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds. 102 people attended.

To view video and photos from this event, visit our website: www.iowacaregivers.org.

"Do you know what a Direct Care Worker (DCW) is?"

I'm sure that on January 8th, Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords had no idea that her life would be saved by the quick thinking of her aide who attributes his knowledge to the fact that he was a Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.) who took the class while in High School.



"Do you think we "just" wipe bottoms, give baths and change linens?"

Do you know what a Direct Care Worker (DCW) does?

Have you ever walked in our shoes? Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds has. She joined Iowa CareGivers Association in our "Come Care with Me" campaign. I know in my heart that she now appreciates the small and large things that a DCW does for those we care for.



"I am glad that direct care worker and direct care workforce issues are finally getting the attention they deserve. We have been an invisible sector to the workforce for far too long. I would also like to thank my legislator, Senator Tom Bowman, for taking the time to be here and for viewing these issues as worthy of his time and attention."



To all Direct Care Workers:

I was very grateful to be able to attend the public forum held on February 22, 2011 at the Des Moines Botanical Center. It was a very educational experience for me and all who attended the meeting. It was a pleasure meeting our new Lt. Governor at the forum. I hope that all who attended came away with an understanding of what is in the future for all of us in the healthcare profession. I was very impressed at the way the forum was delivered. I liked what I heard about the educational standards for direct care workers.

As a direct care worker for almost 20 years now this is the first time that we all will be able to go through more advanced training to further our careers. What is very important to me would be to have the professional credentials that I would be able to take with me wherever I go. I am looking forward to learning some new material that I haven't had before and to get advanced training in different areas of the direct care workforce that I am proud to be a part of. I cannot wait to be a part of the new educational standards that I can bring back to my facility and teach my fellow workers of what I have learned. I also liked all the stories about direct care workers that came from the heart. I wouldn't want to be in any other profession because I love what I do and I love the people I take care of on a daily basis.

"I wouldn't want to be in any other profession..."

Jeff Weinstock
Direct Care Worker from Pella, Iowa
Member Iowa CareGivers Association Direct Care Worker Leadership Council



Advocacy



Thoughts from the Capitol in Des Moines – Yes, We Should All Be Concerned!

By John Hale, ICA Public Policy Consultant

Before the Iowa CareGivers Association (ICA) was formed, the voices of direct care workers were absent at the Capitol in Des Moines. Decisions were made about health and long term care services in Iowa without considering the thoughts and experiences of those who provide the services. **That has changed.**

Those who make the laws now have a much better idea of who direct care workers are, what you do, and the value you have. They understand that Iowa needs many more direct care workers, and needs to do a much better job of encouraging people to make the direct care job a career.

They know all this because of the ICA. We are the **ONE AND ONLY** voice at the Capitol fighting for direct care workers; to make your jobs better, to make your lives better, and to enhance the quality of care you provide to aging Iowans and those with a disability.

That's why it's critically important for the ICA to continue to exist. And that's why it's important for you to know and to understand that the continued existence and impact of the ICA is very uncertain. The representatives elected to the Iowa legislature are, as of this writing, debating whether to continue to support the work of the ICA and to support the needs of direct care workers. The decisions they make on providing funds to support this work will determine the future of ICA and the services and supports they provide to the direct care workforce. Should you be concerned? Absolutely. Many of you have shared your concerns with the people from your areas that are elected to serve in the Iowa legislature. That's been really important to do. How will it turn out? We simply do not know at this point.

I'll be providing more thoughts on the funding for ICA, and more details on other things the legislature did or did not do, once the legislative session ends. That will be posted to the ICA website at www.iowacaregivers.org. I hope you'll take a look at it and I hope that we have good news to share!

Direct Care Workers Share the Love and Challenges of Their Work A Conversation with Former and Existing Direct Care Workers

Injury on the job, stress, heavy workloads, and short-staffing are common in the field of direct care. Despite that, a group of former and existing direct care workers LOVE the work, their jobs, and more importantly the people they serve. In a recent conversation, Julie Grugan, former CNA; Carol Logue, CNA/CMA; Julie Ecklin, former CNA; Jayne Holste, Home Care Aide; and Vicki Erickson, CNA shared their stories with Iowa CareGivers Association staff, Linda Simonton. All have been faced with health or injury issues, and physical limitations in carrying out the demands of the job. Those challenges are made even worse when forced to work short-staffed. Clearly, if we are to ensure that we have enough direct care workers to meet the growing demand, we cannot ignore the needs and concerns of the workers.

Carol Logue, CNA/CMA on being thankful for good health insurance through her employer..

Carol was airlifted to a nearby hospital after a heart attack in 2009. Three stints, and rehab got her back on her feet, but she suffered another blocked and torn artery which prevented her from being a candidate for a stint. It was believed that dental conditions and stress of the job may have contributed to her cardiac problems. She was thankful to have had good health insurance through her employer, Heritage House in Atlantic.

Pictured (L to R) are: Jayne Holste, HCA and Linda Simonton, Iowa CareGivers Association.



Pictured (L to R) are: Julie Grugan, former CNA and Linda Simonton, Iowa CareGivers Association.

Julie Grugan, former CNA, on mandatory staffing levels to protect clients and workers ...

"I think the body breaks down. CNAs have to lift by themselves a lot. Supposedly, they're not supposed to do that, but they have to because there's no one to help them right away." Julie injured her back while transferring a bariatric patient who was determined to go to the commode, even though Julie was the only one to help her. She had called for the nurse, but the nurse didn't get there in time because the patient couldn't wait. "I could feel something in my back rip," she said. The sciatica got so bad, that while at work, she was afraid she might drop a client and she didn't want to risk that, so she quit to work at a local retailer. According to Julie, "It's a lot of responsibility for direct care workers because when they're working short, if someone they're assigned to falls, they're responsible, even if they weren't in the process of taking care of the person. It goes on the aide's records if someone falls and we can be prosecuted for abuse. We don't get paid to take on this kind of liability!" In her retail job she stocks shelves at night and makes more than she did as a CNA. "When I have a heavy box to lift, I call for help. The box waits right there, unlike patients," Julie said. Julie believes mandatory minimum staff ratios would keep both clients and aides safer.

Vicki Erickson, CNA... on injury, lost income, and medical debt...

Vicki has worked as a CNA for a number of years. She was let go by a former employer after back surgery to fuse vertebrae that required her to be off work 10 1/2 months. She suffered an injury on the job while lifting a patient with someone who didn't know how to lift. Lost wages were a huge concern for Vicki and her husband, Ray, who still have approximately \$9,000 in medical debt. "When short staffed at my current place of employment, the extra lifting really bothers my back," she said. She has had to pass "Fit for Duty" evaluations in order to return to work. Vicki said, "I'm not sure how long I can keep it up. I know my limits, if I work more than 8 hours, I can't stand up."

Julie Ecklin, former CNA on going back to work too soon and co-workers helping her through...

"I loved my work. It was the most healing job for me. I worked with Alzheimer's clients. My grandma was at Heritage and I got to take care of her. That was the epitome for me...to take care of her and other people. Old people are wonderful to work for. They just need patience and understanding. I loved hearing them tell about their lives and stories."

Julie worked at Heritage for four years before she had to have neck surgery. She is certain the injury was work related and due to the wear and tear on her body but it is difficult to prove. She went back to work too soon and her co-workers helped her out or she could not have done it. In 2008 she was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia and in February 2009 she simply didn't have the strength to handle the physical demands of the work any longer.

Jayne Holste, Home Care Aide ... on job related injury and working with pain...

Jayne has worked in both home care and nursing home settings, and at times two jobs. She injured her shoulder 5 years ago. She and co-worker, Julie Ecklin, were transferring a large male patient when he sat down with no warning. Rather than let him fall, Jayne twisted to keep him from falling and tore her shoulder. She has constant pain. There's nothing that can be done about it so she will have pain forever and will likely get arthritis in the shoulder.

Eleven years ago she injured her back working in home care. It was treated by burning the nerve endings. That helped some, but still has pain. People in home care are usually on their own for lifting and transfers. We can't afford to send out a second person, even in difficult cases.

Cindy Ramer Shares Podium with US Surgeon General

... a story of no insurance, medical debt, bankruptcy and loss of her husband to a heart attack



Pictured (L to R): Jessica Urban, small business owner; US Surgeon General Dr. Regina M. Benjamin; Dr. Richard Deming, Radiation Oncologist; Cindy Ramer, CNA.

I was honored to share the platform on the steps of the State Capitol with US Surgeon General, Dr. Regina M. Benjamin, during a press conference. I shared my story about losing my husband to a heart attack after racking up \$30,000 in medical debt and filing bankruptcy. You can hear my story at www.iowacaregivers.org.

The event recognized the 1-year anniversary of the passage of the federal health care reform law. The ICA served as a co-host of the event along with the Iowa Citizens Action Network, the Child and Family Policy Center, the American Cancer Society and the Iowa Alliance for Retired Americans.

Senator Danielson Walks in the Shoes of Direct Care Workers



Cindy Ramer, CNA and Senator Jeff Danielson

Cindy Ramer, with the help of her employer, Harmony House in Waterloo, hosted a "Come Care with Me" event for Senator Jeff Danielson. These events are intended to offer policy makers an opportunity to experience first hand the work done by direct care workers and to gain a greater appreciation for the impact the workers have on the lives of those they serve.

*"...building a solid relationship with lawmakers will create positive change in health care."
--Harmony House Administrator, Barbara Murphy*



Pictured are Barbara Murphy, Administrator of Harmony House and Senator Jeff Danielson



Pictured are Cody Beninga, Senator Jeff Danielson, and Kelly Stokes, CNA

*"Walking in the shoes of direct care workers is a moment I will never forget."
--Senator Jeff Danielson*



Pictured are Kelly Stokes, CNA and Senator Jeff Danielson

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Laura Stein, CNA "Hero of the Heartland"

Recently, Laura Stein, a direct care worker and member of the Iowa CareGivers Association's Direct Care Worker Leadership Council was recognized by the American Red Cross for her dedication to providing loving care to the residents at Southfield Wellness Community in Webster City and serving as a positive role model. She was nominated for the "Heroes of the Heartland" award by her co-workers.



Pictured above are Molly Nelson, who served as Master of Ceremonies, and Laura Stein, Direct Care Worker, "Heroes of the Heartland" award recipient.

Congratulations to Cindy Ramer and Laura Schroeder who after serving two three-year terms on the ICA Direct Care Worker Leadership Council will now serve as Direct Care Worker Regional Consultants. They will play a key role in outreach efforts in eastern and northeastern Iowa.

Congratulations to Debra Jo Larsen, former ICA Leadership Council member, who was just appointed by Governor Branstad to serve on the Iowa Board of Nursing. Deb is now a licensed practical nurse. Way to go Deb!

Congratulations to Scott Armstrong, CNA and Mentor, Madrid Home, for being appointed by Governor Terry Branstad to the Dependent Adult Protection Advisory Council.

New Name for Hospice of Central Iowa

Hospice of Central Iowa is growing to better serve the comfort care needs of your family, friends and community. Under our organization's new name, HCI Care Services, we now offer three care services. Each of our services seeks to enhance quality of life, assure dignity, and support individuals in their efforts to live in the place where they are most comfortable. Our care services include:

HCI Hospice Care Services – Our traditional hospice care service continues to provide comfort and assistance to individuals and families living with life-limiting illnesses.

HCI ExtraCare Services – Our new private duty service is for individuals and family caregivers who would like extra assistance in their homes. Services range from companionship and running errands to chronic disease management and medication set-up.

HCI Palliative Medicine – To be launched this fall, this new service will offer comfort care to individuals with serious illness. Those interested in this service can continue seeking curative treatment while receiving our service.

All of our services are not-for-profit, we remain an independent organization, and we continue in our long-standing tradition of providing effective community-based care. I invite you to visit our new web site: www.hcicareservices.org, to learn more about the many ways we can offer comfort to you and your loved ones.

Iowa CareGivers Association's 2010 Annual Report to the Community is now available.

Visit our website at www.iowacaregivers.org to download a copy or call our office at 515.223.2805 to request a hard copy.

And thanks for your support!

BROCHURE AVAILABLE FROM IOWA PERSON DIRECTED CARE COALITION (IPDCC)

This brochure is designed to educate consumers on Person Directed Care and is geared toward someone who may be considering moving into a care facility. It offers suggestions on what the consumer should ask and look for based on what is important to them.

The brochure is free to anyone to download and print to share with consumers. To download the brochure:
http://www.iowapersondirectedcare.org/images/FINAL_ipdcc%20Choose%20your%20day.pdf

For more, visit www.iowapersondirectedcare.org or call Julie at 1-866-236-1430.

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Direct Care Worker Outreach Coordinator

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Program & Research Manager

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Data Management Associate

ICA Consultants:

Terry Fankhauser, Finance Consultant

John Hale, Public Policy Consultant

Iowa CareGivers Association

1211 Vine Street, Suite 1120

West Des Moines, IA 50265

Ph: 515-223-2805

Toll Free: 888-710-2762

Fax: 515-226-3214

Email: information@iowacaregivers.org

Website: www.iowacaregivers.org

May is Fibromyalgia Awareness and Education Month

Governor Terry Branstad has signed a proclamation declaring May as Fibromyalgia Awareness and Education Month. Approximately five million Americans have this condition which disproportionately affects women. The syndrome causes widespread pain and a heightened sense of tenderness; other symptoms include debilitating fatigue, sleep disturbance, and joint stiffness. Fortunately, these symptoms can be managed with treatment when properly diagnosed.

However, diagnosis is difficult because there is no known cause and the symptoms are similar to many other ailments. In most cases, patients are asked to utilize different medications before a clear determination of Fibromyalgia is provided and sometimes a patient must consult multiple healthcare providers, suffering for years before getting a correct diagnosis. This is why education is so important and quick diagnosis is the key to helping these patients return to a life free of pain.

Patients who struggle with the symptoms of this condition need to seek the care of a physician. There are treatment options that significantly increase the quality of life. Support groups, medication and physical therapy, are all methods to address the chronic and common problem of Fibromyalgia.

Thank you to Iowa House of Representatives Member Helen Miller of Fort Dodge for her contribution to the Iowa CareGivers Association in memory of Edward Miller.

Thank you to Iowa CareGivers Association Board Members, Betty Grandquist and Shirley Sorenson for making contributions in memory of Margaret Swanson, former ICA Board Member and Community Philanthropist.

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Please remember to update us if you have any name or contact information changes, so that you can continue to receive the ICA HUB and other program announcements. Thank you.

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