

**POOL WORKER SURVEY  
REPORT OF FINDINGS**



**October 2004**



**IOWA BETTER JOBS BETTER CARE (BJBC) COALITION**

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Funded through a 3 ½ -year, \$1.4 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Atlantic Philanthropies, The Iowa Better Jobs Better Care Coalition is a group of long-term care providers, workers, consumers, and policy makers that is working to reduce turnover among Iowa’s direct care workers. The members of the Iowa BJBC Coalition as of September 2004 are:

Iowa CareGivers Association, Lead Agency  
AARP Iowa  
Aging Resources of Central Iowa  
Alzheimer’s Association, Greater Iowa Chapter  
Center for Healthy Communities  
Des Moines Area Community College  
Direct Care Worker Advisory Council  
Generations, Incorporated  
Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
Iowa Association of Homes and Services for the Aging  
Iowa Commission on the Status of Women

Iowa Department of Elder Affairs  
Iowa Department of Human Services, Bureau of Protective Services  
Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, Health Facilities Division  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
Mid-Iowa Health Foundation  
Northwest Iowa Community College  
Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman  
Older Iowans Legislature  
Lin Salasberry, Direct Care Worker  
Southwestern Community College  
University of Iowa College of Nursing Certification Center



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Founded in 1992, the **mission** of the Iowa CareGivers Association is “to enhance the quality of care through dedication to the direct care worker and all caregivers.” To accomplish its mission, ICA fosters partnerships between and among workers, advocates, providers, consumers, policy makers, labor, educators, and others committed to quality care. ICA has three main **goals**: 1) increase access to quality care for those who need it, 2) increase the number of caregivers, and 3) enhance quality of care. ICA’s focus is on four core **mission-driven activities**: 1) advocacy, 2) public awareness, 3) education, and 4) research and innovation.



**IOWA COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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The Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, a division in the Department of Human Rights, is a state agency that promotes the full participation by women in the economic, political, and social life of the state.

## INTRODUCTION

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### Background

- This study is conducted under the auspices of the Iowa Better Jobs Better Care (BJBC) Coalition through a 3-year, \$1.4 million grant sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies.
- The Iowa BJBC Coalition is a group of long-term care providers, workers, consumers, and policy makers that is working to reduce turnover among Iowa's direct care workers\*.
- The Iowa CareGivers Association (ICA) is the lead agency for the BJBC Coalition.
- This study is co-sponsored by the Iowa Commission on the Status of Woman.

\*Direct care workers are Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Nursing Assistants, Home Care Workers, and Personal Attendants - in nursing homes, home care agencies, hospices, and hospitals.

### Purpose

- The purpose of the study is to examine the motivation of Iowa's direct care workers to work in medical personnel pools or temporary staffing agencies.

### Objectives

The objectives for this pool worker survey are:

- Gain an understanding of the reasons direct care workers choose to work for pools.
- Discover the most and least appealing aspects of working for pools.
- Gather direct care pool workers' ideas for improving pool work.
- Ascertain the strength of direct care workers' preference for pool work.

### This report

- The pool survey questions are open-ended.
- This version of the report includes only the summaries of the verbatim responses.
- The forty pages of transcribed verbatim responses are posted on the ICA website at [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org) or are available by contacting the Iowa CareGivers Association at 515-241-8697 or [iowacga@aol.com](mailto:iowacga@aol.com).

## METHODOLOGY

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### Population and sample

- The information in this report was gathered as part of a larger mail survey, the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Wage and Benefits Survey.
- The population for the Wage and Benefits Survey is Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) who are listed on the State of Iowa Nurse Aide Registry.
- From the Registry, a random sample of 4,500 names was drawn. Of the 4,500 names, 1,500 were a sub-set of those in the Registry who are designated as pool workers.
- Although the same survey was sent to all 4,500 CNAs, only those who had worked for a pool at any time in the past 2 years were asked to respond to the pool worker section of the questionnaire.

### The survey

- The survey was mailed on July 8, 2004.
- The returns were collected until August 20, 2004
- Of the 4,500 surveys mailed, 956 were returned as “undeliverable.”
- A total of 808 surveys were returned, which is a 23% response rate.
- Of the 808 returned surveys, 134 responded to most of the pool worker questions.
- The maximum standard error range at the 95% confidence level for a sample of 134 respondents is  $\pm 8.5\%$ .

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

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<b>Job Status</b>	Number of respondents	(172)
	Full time pool worker	12%
	Part time pool worker	23%
	Not as a pool worker at this time	66%
<b>Tenure as a CNA</b>	Number of respondents	(120)
	More than 1 year but less than 3 years	2%
	3 to 5 years	11%
	6 to 10 years	31%
	11 to 20 years	33%
	More than 20 years	24%
<b>Total hours of CNA training</b>	Number of respondents	(120)
	60 hours	10%
	75 hours	31%
	120 hours	19%
	More than 120 hours	30%
<b>Gender</b>	Number of respondents	(134)
	Female	93%
	Male	7%

<b>Age</b>	Number of respondents	(120)
	17 to 20 years	0%
	21 to 30 years	31%
	31 to 40 years	27%
	41 to 50 years	22%
	51 to 60 years	13%
	Over 60 years	8%
	Mean age 53.47	
	Median age 37.5	

<b>Site of <u>current</u> CNA job</b>	Number of respondents	(116)
	Nursing home	59%
	Hospital	16%
	Home care	13%
	Assisted living	5%
	Private duty (self employed)	5%
	Adult day center	0%
	Hospice	<1%
	Other	5%

<b>Location of <u>current</u> CNA job</b>	Number of respondents	(132)
	Urban	39%
	Rural	61%

## KEY FINDINGS

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<b>Main reason for choosing pool work</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>(176)</b>
More money		43%
Flexible schedule, set own schedule		19%
More hours		6%
Enjoy caring for clients/elderly		4%
Choice of jobs, assignments		3%
Gain new experience, knowledge		3%
Meet new people, networking		3%
Less stressful, physically demanding		2%
Avoid workplace conflict, politics		1%
Paid weekly		1%
Stay on Registry, maintain certification		1%
Other		11%

<b>Most appealing aspects of pool work</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>(202)</b>
More money		28%
Flexible schedule, set own schedule		26%
Choice of jobs, assignments		7%
Meet new people, networking		6%
Avoid workplace conflict, politics		3%
Paid weekly		3%
Enjoy caring for clients/elderly		2%
Less stressful, physically demanding		1%
Gain new experience, knowledge		<1%
More hours		<1
Other		21%

<b>Least appealing aspects of pool work</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>(166)</b>
Scheduling issues		34%
Travel		26%
No benefits		9%
Problems with regular staff		8%
Unfamiliar with facility, staff, clients		8%
Undesirable work assignments, heavy work		4%
Low pay		3%
Nothing		3%
Poor quality of care, poor treatment of clients		2%
Working short, understaffed		2%
Other		11%

<b>Ideas for improving pool work</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>(148)</b>
Improved scheduling		18%
Better benefits		13%
Better pay, bonuses		11%
Reimburse for travel expenses		11%
Respect/support pool workers		9%
Less travel, work closer to home		7%
Improved client/floor orientation		7%
More continuity in assignments		3%
Better agency/facility management		2%
More staff, less working short staffed		1%
Opportunity for advancement		1%
Other		11%
None/don't know/not sure		5%

**Agree with statement:**  
**“I prefer working in a pool over any**  
**other type of CNA work**

Number of respondents	(172)
Strongly agree	17%
Somewhat agree	47%
Disagree	37%