

January 2009: Special Policy Edition

# THE HUB

Iowa CareGivers Association Newsletter: Delivering information to those who are at the center of quality care



**IOWA CareGivers**  
ASSOCIATION

Enhancing the quality of care by providing education, recognition, advocacy and research in support of direct care workers.

## THIS IS YOUR INVITATION TO JOIN US AT THE IOWA CAREGIVERS ASSOCIATION DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL: TAKING THE NEXT STEPS Monday, January 26, 2009

This is your day to urge legislators to take the next steps to provide better wages, access to health care, and educational standards for direct care workers.

*This will be the only invitation to the Day at the State Capitol that you will receive by mail. So if you plan to attend, please call or email the ICA office by January 19, 2009. You can reach us at 515.223.2805 or information@iowacaregivers.org. We hope to see you there!*

### AGENDA

(First 50 to arrive receive a free t-shirt)

#### 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Orientation to the Day

Meet at the Lucas Building, 321 E. 12th Street, Des Moines, IA 5th Floor, Rooms 517 and 518. Parking is available in the visitor lot on the north side of the Lucas Building, or 2 blocks south of the Capitol by the Judicial Branch Building, or the ramp at East Grand and Pennsylvania near the State Historical Building where you can catch the free shuttle to the Capitol. You may check out other options for parking at <http://das.gse.iowa.gov/events/parkinginfo.html>.

#### 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Visit at the Iowa State Capitol

We will be setting up our exhibit and visiting with legislators in the rotunda area of the Capitol Building. Please come and visit with your legislator about issues important to direct care workers.  
(Light lunch items will be served at the Capitol near our exhibit.)

**For more on what to expect at the Day at the State Capitol, see page 3.**

### Attention:

#### Iowa CareGivers Association DCW Leadership Council

Your January meeting will be immediately following the Visit to the Iowa State Capitol. We will be meeting in Room 104 on the first floor of Mercy Capitol. Mercy Capitol is located about a block Northeast of the State Capitol Building. The meeting will last until 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. Please plan accordingly. You'll receive more information in the mail.

**Inside: Much, much more...**

## YOUR VOICES

Was the 2008 session of the Iowa Legislature important to direct care workers? You bet it was! It was historic.



John Hale,  
ICA Policy Director

The year 2008 represented a year where your voices were

heard loud and clear. Your voices told stories about the amount and type of care that direct care workers provide to Iowans, about the value of that work, and about the need to do more to attract Iowans to the profession and to keep them in it.

In addition to your voices, it was your faces that made a difference in 2008. Legislators in Iowa saw you more frequently. They saw you at the Capitol in Des Moines, at public meetings across the state, at Presidential candidate events, and through your leadership on committees dealing with issues like direct care worker training and education.

Legislators also heard more frequently from others who support you. The result of your efforts was the passage of a landmark piece of legislation... House File 2539 signed into law by Governor Culver in May of 2008.

**What Does House File  
2539 Mean for You?  
See inside.**

*This newsletter is made possible by the Iowa Department of Public Health and United States Department of Human Services (USDHS) Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Grant #1D1DHP10751-01-00*

## HOUSE FILE 2539 CONTAINED GOOD NEWS FOR YOU!

House File 2539 is a law passed by the Iowa Legislature last year. It contains major steps to reform health care in Iowa by expanding affordable and adequate health care coverage to children and adults. It also addresses health and long term care workforce issues including improving wages, health care coverage, and educational standards. That's good news for you.

### *ICA 2009 Policy Priorities : Next Steps to Be Taken*

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This is no time to sit back and relax. The success that we had in 2008 now needs to be built on...we need to take the next steps to insure that the attention given to direct care worker issues continues in 2009.

#### **TAKING THE NEXT STEPS TO A STABLE DIRECT CARE WORKFORCE:**

The 2008 session of the Iowa General Assembly passed landmark legislation (House File 2539) that addressed several critical issues for direct care workers. Our goal in 2009 is to work with legislators and the Governor's Office to keep the attention on those issues and to "take the next steps" that will



- Make adequate and affordable health insurance available to direct care workers and all Iowans
- Create a health insurance Premium Assistance Demonstration Project for direct care workers
- Increase the pay and benefits of direct care workers in all care settings by continuing the work of the Direct Care Worker Compensation Advisory Council
- Implement the work of the Direct Care Worker Training and Certification Advisory Council by creating and funding a Direct Care Worker Certification Board within the Iowa Department of Public Health, and by expanding the Direct Care Worker Registry within the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals
- Ensure implementation of revised Accountability Measures designed to encourage, measure, reward and publicize high levels of nursing home performance
- Expand consumer access to data that allows them to easily compare direct care staffing and turnover levels in nursing facilities

### *Important: Know Who Your Legislators Are*

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To find out who your legislators are, call the Legislative Information Office at 515-281-5129. Be prepared to provide your address, so they can determine your district and your legislators. Or if you know your district, you may provide that and they will tell you who your new Senator and Representative are and how to contact them.

After January 12, 2009, when all the newly elected legislators officially take office, you may visit the Iowa Legislature website at <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/> to find your legislators names and their contact information.



The Department of Public Health (DPH) DCW Advisory Council Final Report is now on the DPH website.

To download a copy of this report, visit [http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr\\_committees/common/pdf/direct\\_care\\_workers/report\\_nov08.pdf](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcr_committees/common/pdf/direct_care_workers/report_nov08.pdf)

# What You Can Do

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP WITH US ...on January 26!

Legislation happens because legislators listen to you when you call, write, e-mail and meet with them. The items in House File 2539 pertaining to direct care workers are there because you spoke – they listened. When you are at the table good things happen!

If you care about these issues, you will take at least one of the following steps on JANUARY 26, 2009!

- Join us in Des Moines at the Iowa State Capitol to visit with your legislators about issues important to you

If you can't join us...

- Call your legislator
- Send an email message to your legislator
- Send a letter to your legislator

Our goal on the 26th is to be seen, heard and to have direct care worker issues talked about and given the attention they deserve. It is important that WE ALL TAKE THIS STEP TOGETHER ON JANUARY 26. Please let ICA know what step you took. The more people who participate, the more people will listen.

## WHAT'S OUR MESSAGE?

The message to your legislator on January 26th should be short and simple. Whether you call, e-mail, write or visit in person, you should tell them:

- Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a direct care worker from (town) or Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I live in (town) and I'm a supporter of direct care workers.
- I appreciate and thank the legislature for the work you've begun in House File 2539 passed in 2008 to increase the wages, health benefits and training of direct care workers.
- I ask you to take the next steps needed to make those things happen. Next Steps would include making the money available to increase wages, health benefits and expand training for direct care workers.
- Your support will lead to better jobs for direct care workers and better care for lowans.
- Thank you for your time and support.

If you are unable to talk by phone or in person, make sure to leave your name and phone number.

## DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL: WHAT TO EXPECT

*I didn't know what to expect as I ventured to the Capitol for the first time in my entire life. Not only was the thought of talking with my legislator intimidating, but the whole experience of being at the Capitol building was overwhelming. But I did it, I really did. And, you know what, it wasn't that bad. My legislator was a person just like me. And they are there to help and to listen. It's exciting to know that I made a difference. And now after a few years of attending the Day at the Capitol, I feel like a pro. There are several of us who have been there before with all the fears and questions, and if you join us on January 26, we'll be there to help you through it. --DCW*

### Who Should Attend?

We welcome direct care workers (CNAs, HCAs, other direct care workers), family caregivers, other health & long term care workers, those receiving care or supportive services, health and long term care employers/providers, quality care advocates, state department representatives, and others who support caregivers.

### Can I bring a friend?

YES! Bring a friend, co-worker, employer, resident, client, family member, fellow advocate.

### Is there a Cost to Attend the Meeting?

There is no fee to attend this event and light lunch items will be provided at the Capitol exhibit.

### What should I wear?

T-shirts will be handed out to the first 50 who attend the orientation. They can be worn over your other attire and will provide us with an identity at the Capitol. Otherwise, just wear casual/work attire and comfortable shoes (no jeans, please).

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*Policy Director*

Lin Salasberry  
*Direct Care Worker Outreach Coordinator*

Georgeanna Spagnola  
*Data Management Assistant*

## Iowa CareGivers Association

1211 Vine Street, Suite 1120

West Des Moines, IA 50265

Phone: (515) 223-2805

Fax: (515) 226-3214

Email: [information@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:information@iowacaregivers.org)

Website: [www.iowacaregivers.com](http://www.iowacaregivers.com)

**EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT  
MAY PUT MONEY IN YOUR POCKET**

No one wants to think about this, but it will soon be time to file your income tax returns!

In 2009, remember this: there is something in the law called an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Its purpose is to reduce the amount of taxes owed for people who are in low-to-moderate income families.

Estimates are that up to 25% of the families eligible for an Earned Income Tax Credit (called the EITC) do not receive it. Why? Because many people have never heard of it, and even if they have, the law is complex.

When you do your taxes this year, take the time to think about the Earned Income Tax Credit. If someone does your taxes for you, ask them about it. If you do your own, you may want to call the IRS toll free at 1-800-829-1040 to ask if you are eligible. If you are eligible and you've figured out the amount of the credit, you can use that amount to take an additional credit on your State of Iowa return. For help with your state return, you can call toll-free to 1-800-367-3388.

This tax credit can save you hundreds if not thousands of dollars—make the effort to ask and learn about it!

**IOWA CAREGIVERS  
ASSOCIATION  
HUB NEWSLETTER**

Look inside for articles, information, and much more...

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*All advertising is subject to ICA approval. We do not run job listings. We do run ads promoting facilities or agencies and any special programs for CNAs or other direct care workers which would be of special interest to our members and other readers. If you would like to submit materials or ads for publication, please contact us at 515-223-2805 or by email at [information@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:information@iowacaregivers.org).*

*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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Iowa CareGivers Association  
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West Des Moines, IA 50265