



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

IOWA CAREGIVERS ASSOCIATION (ICA) HISTORY

The Iowa CareGivers Association (ICA), an independent nonprofit (501(c)(3)), was founded in 1992 in response to the growing concerns about the shortage and high turnover rates of direct care workers (DCWs) such as Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs), Home Care Aides (HCAs), personal attendants and others. ICA's sole purpose is to improve the DCW profession by education, research, support, advocacy, and programs that create career and leadership opportunities and enhanced status within the field of direct care.

The ICA is one of the first DCW associations in the country and now leads the way for numerous other states starting similar associations. The ICA works in partnership with DCWs, people receiving care and their families, nursing homes, home care agencies and other providers, policy makers, educators, government entities, and community members committed to quality care. The maintenance of a stable, well educated, trained, respected and compensated direct care workforce is vital to the safety and well-being of Iowans.

ICA TODAY

From its humble beginning, founded by a former nurse aide, ICA has become a nationally recognized organization, governed by a committed volunteer Board of Directors and guided by a statewide Direct Care Worker Leadership Council. ICA has grown from a staff of one and an annual budget of \$6,500 in 1992 to a staff of five and an annual budget of \$687,000 in 2006. Sources of income are private, public, individual donors, and fees for service.

ICA has consistently shared the voice of DCWs and been an advocate for the high quality care they provide when offered appropriate education, tools, and support.

MISSION AND GOALS

ICA's **mission** is, *“Enhancing quality of care by providing education, recognition, advocacy and research in support of direct care workers.”*

ICA has three main **goals**:

1. Increase access to quality care for those who need it
2. Increase the number of direct care workers
3. Enhance the quality of care

VALUES

- Direct care workers should have the opportunity to work in a supportive environment where they are able to deliver the high quality of care they want to provide.
- Direct care workers' input should be sought and embraced in quality care decisions.
- Direct care workers should have opportunities for personal and professional growth and development.
- Direct care workers are essential members of the health and long term care team and should be treated with respect by co-workers, supervisors, administrators, physicians, clients, families, and the public.
- Direct care workers should earn an adequate livable wage and have access to health care.
- Direct care work should be recognized as a profession, with a distinct education and training criteria, professional standards, and competency requirements.
- Direct care workers should have opportunities to network with peers, and in doing so, create a support system that fosters greater pride, commitment, responsibility, and dedication to their profession and jobs.
- Direct care workers should have opportunities to speak on behalf of their profession and should have their voices heard in policy making and in the community.

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