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For Immediate Use

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Representative Heddens Walks in the Shoes of Direct Care Workers

Madrid, Iowa: On Friday, July 17th, State Representative Lisa Heddens (D-Ames) participated in a Come Care With Me Day sponsored by the Madrid Home Communities and the Iowa CareGivers Association (ICA).

As part of the event, Representative Heddens worked along side certified nurse aides as they provided care to Madrid Home residents. Certified Nurse Aides who guided Representative Heddens during the day included Jessica Jungck, Michael Dittert, Brenda Haberer, Nicole Udorvich, Sadie Fuson, April Brown and Jessica Pitts.

The day, according to Madrid Home President/CEO Keith Kudej, was an opportunity for facility staff to talk with Representative Heddens about, and to display, the important and difficult work they do and the impact they have on the lives of residents and their families. Kudej said that "We are proud of our facility and the staff that work here. They are talented people who truly care about the folks they serve."

Representative Heddens was an active participant during the day. In describing the day, Heddens said that "I didn't come here just to watch. I came here to work, and to get a better appreciation for both the rewards and the challenges of the job. I came away with a greater understanding of how difficult the work is, and how valuable these workers are."

The direct care staff that led Representative Heddens during the day appreciated the opportunity. "We really want to thank Representative Heddens for spending time with us and getting to know us and our work," said staff member Michael Dittert. "Most people don't realize how difficult our jobs are and how close we are to the residents. In many cases, we become part of the family, sharing the good times as well as the bad times."

The day was organized by the Iowa CareGivers Association as a way to bring more attention to the direct care workforce, and to point out the growing "care gap" that exists in Iowa and around the nation. Di Findley, the Executive Director of the Association, said that "We face a growing direct care workforce crisis caused by too few people to meet the growing demand for care. Access to high quality care simply isn't possible without an adequate number of staff, a well trained staff, and a stable staff. Having legislators like Representative Heddens who have walked in the shoes of direct care staff is key to getting the workforce issues addressed."

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For more information about the Iowa CareGivers Association, phone 515 223 2805 or e-mail information@iowacaregivers.org