

“Direct care is my career, and after 23 years, all I ask is that society accept what I do as a career choice.”

- Anthony C. Wells, Certified Nursing Assistant; Certified Hospice & Palliative Nursing Assistant



Dear Friend,

Even before the pandemic, professionals like Anthony who make up our direct care workforce had already had their work devalued. They’ve been overwhelmed by shortages and high turnover, which place those who need them at greater risk.

Direct care workers (DCWs) make up one of the largest segments of our workforce, one that will only increase in demand as we experience an ever-widening care gap that we as a state are not nearly prepared for.

AND IF THE PAST YEAR HAS SHOWN US ANYTHING, IT’S THAT IOWA’S CAREGIVING GAP IS WIDER AND DEEPER THAN WE COULD HAVE IMAGINED.

Even as Iowa CareGivers continues to work with our partners to ensure Iowans have the well-prepared and well-compensated direct care workforce we will need for the future, the current needs of DCWs cannot wait.

They continue to deal with mental health concerns, whether grief due to the loss of those they care for, or fear of contracting and spreading the virus to them or a loved one. They still struggle with the inability to afford additional childcare or healthcare for themselves and their families and working extra hours with no paid leave.

Yet, whether in your home now or in a care facility when you most need them, direct care workers *show up every day to help keep you safe* ... even if they must put their own lives on the line to do so. They do so despite the burdens that overwhelm them, both on the job and at home.

During the pandemic, Iowa CareGivers has dedicated our efforts to addressing *the safety, protections and wellbeing of frontline caregivers*, providing them with the tools and resources they need.

- **Transition vital training programs to virtual formats—at no cost to DCWs—enabling us to reach more DCWs and those in their care across the state.**
- **Expand programs that provide DCWs with opportunities for personal and professional growth and enrichment through education and peer networking, building their skills and knowledge in the field of direct care, and their connections with others in the profession.**



Statewide theme-based conference provides DCWs time to network with others in the field and to have a little fun with the “Caregivers Are Out of This World” theme photo booth.

- Implement “The Toughest Job You’ll Ever Love” recruitment, retention, and public awareness program, in which Anthony has been involved. The program equips DCWs with tools and resources to start conversations with and educate others about who DCWs are and the rewards and challenges of their work.
- And survey DCWs, reaching out to engage them through numerous surveys to understand the concerns that persist in their lives, and working to address them.



Graduates of Toughest Job You’ll Ever Love Leadership Program.

BUT WE CANNOT DO IT ALONE.



Survey Question:
Are you a health care worker facing additional childcare challenges due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

49%

Can’t afford the cost of additional childcare needed due to COVID

40%

No access to a childcare provider

While the end of the pandemic is in sight, its effects will linger in our lives—as individuals, as families and communities and as a society—for years to come. For direct care workers, these effects will continue to be front and center in their lives for the foreseeable future.

Will you join in helping DCWs through the weeks and months ahead with a gift to Iowa CareGivers today?

We are extremely grateful for your support that enables us to make a difference in the lives of loved ones, friends, and neighbors as well as the essential workers who support them.

Use the enclosed envelope to join Iowa CareGivers in this critical work or donate online at: <https://bit.ly/3i2ycr2>

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Di Findley".

Di Findley, Executive Director

***P.S.** The photos above were taken at our Iowa CareGivers annual conference and training prior to the pandemic. As you can see, the pride and value DCWs derive from these opportunities to network and connect with others in the profession is vital to their well-being and ability to do their jobs—and to those of us who depend on them.*

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