

# Preparing the Future Workforce for the Delivery of Equitable Health and Human Services

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## About Us

National organization committed to strengthening the direct care workforce

Research, advocacy, workforce innovation, and public education

Leading expert on direct care workers

360-degree perspective

Decades of working in states, cities, and small towns across America



# The Washington Post

**‘This will be catastrophic’: Maine families face elder boom, worker shortage in preview of nation’s future**

## The Direct Care Workforce in the U.S.

- Support older adults and people with disabilities across settings
- Titles vary by occupation, state, and institutional provider
- 4.6 million direct care workers in the U.S.—25k+ workers in Maine
  - Larger than any other single occupation in the U.S.
- 8.2 million job openings in direct care between 2018-2028
  - 38k direct care job openings in Maine, 2018-2028

SOURCE: <http://phinational.org/policy-research/key-facts-faq/>



## An Increasingly **Diverse** Direct Care Workforce (2020)

The typical home care worker is a woman in her 40s—many are immigrants and/or women of color. **The demographics are changing.**



87%

WOMEN

27%

IMMIGRANT

61%

PEOPLE OF  
COLOR

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MEDIAN AGE

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PEOPLE OF  
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MEDIAN AGE

10%

PEOPLE OF  
COLOR

40

MEDIAN AGE



## Low Wages, High Poverty: Direct Care Workers

Low wages and irregular schedules make it difficult to retain and recruit workers in this sector. **As a result, turnover remains high.**



### U.S. Direct Care Workers (2020)

**\$12.80**

MEDIAN  
HOURLY  
WAGE

**\$20,300**

MEDIAN  
PERSONAL  
EARNINGS

**31%**

PART TIME

**45%**

IN OR NEAR  
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### Maine Direct Care Workers (2020)

**\$14.37**

MEDIAN  
HOURLY  
WAGE

**\$20,200**

MEDIAN  
PERSONAL  
EARNINGS

**39%**

PART TIME

**43%**

IN OR NEAR  
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### Key Facts

- **\$11.13** – Median hourly wage for home care workers who are women of color, versus \$12.38 for white men
- **53%** - Percentage of women of color home care workers living in or near poverty, compared to 38% of white men
- **\$37,600** – Median family income for women of color home care workers, compared to \$47,100 for white men

SOURCE: <http://phinational.org/policy-research/key-facts-faq/>

### From a Living Wage to a Competitive Wage

- In Maine, the median wage for direct care is:
  - \$2.36 lower than occupations with similar entry-level requirements
    - Janitors, retail salespeople, customer service representatives
  - \$0.10 lower than occupations with lower entry-level requirements
    - Housekeepers, groundskeepers, food preparation workers

SOURCE: PHI (2020). For detailed citations and information about PHI's research methodology, please contact [info@PHInational.org](mailto:info@PHInational.org).

"Many CNAs do not get paid enough...  
You have a lot of responsibility taking care  
of members...when you are not earning  
enough money to make ends meet,  
many people leave to find better pay."

# Culix Wibonele

CARE PARTNER AT PARK SPRINGS  
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA

[PHInational.org](https://PHInational.org)





## Limited Training or Career Advancement

The training infrastructure for direct care workers doesn't equip them with the skills, knowledge, confidence, or career paths they need.



### Insufficient training standards—

especially for personal care aides and DSPs

### Lack of specialty training—

variety of topics and special populations

### Didactic training methods

that don't account for adult learners & learning styles

### Few advanced roles

where workers could be better optimized in the care team

## Marginal Data on the Workforce

States rarely collect proper data on the LTSS workforce, which prevents leaders from targeting high-need areas with appropriate interventions.



**Minimal  
systematic  
workforce  
data—**

volume, stability &  
compensation

**No occupational  
code for direct  
support  
professionals—  
and no data**

Hard to answer:  
**What's the  
level of  
workforce need  
and where is it  
greatest?**

## Recruitment & Retention Challenges

LTSS employers are increasingly struggling to find and keep direct care workers, especially in an economy where they have other job options.



**64%**

TURNOVER  
RATE FOR  
HOME CARE  
WORKERS

**99%**

TURNOVER  
RATE FOR  
NURSING  
HOME STAFF

**Job growth & competition—**  
retail & fast food  
increasingly offer  
better jobs than  
direct care



"I think isolation in general is a challenge for caregivers, but with the risk of COVID added, it has really been very taxing. I'd say that's the hardest part of the job for me."

# Erika Honan

HOME CARE PROVIDER AND CAREGIVER  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) PROVIDER  
AT HOMEBRIDGE IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA

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# The Rural Direct Care Crisis

### Unique Rural Barriers

- Limited health and social services in rural areas
- High rates of chronic conditions and poverty
- Fewer younger people, public transportation options
- Inaccessible high-speed internet
- Vast geographic areas



### **Growing Demand, Strained Labor Supply**

- Significant levels of unmet need

# The Rural Direct Care Crisis



**Table 1: Unmet Need by Urban and Rural Location**

| Unmet Need                                       | Urban     |            | Rural     |            | P-value |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|---------|
|  | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |         |
| Stayed in without help                           | 378       | 25.9%      | 90        | 24.9%      | 0.699   |
| Did not go to places within own home             | 355       | 26.8%      | 75        | 23.4%      | 0.212   |
| Often had to stay in bed                         | 133       | 9.7%       | 32        | 8.9%       | 0.782   |
| Went without clean laundry                       | 45        | 3.3%       | 4         | 1.4%       | 0.096   |
| Went without groceries                           | 104       | 5.9%       | 23        | 5.5%       | 0.779   |
| Went without hot meal                            | 148       | 9.5%       | 28        | 7.9%       | 0.372   |
| Went without handling bills or financial matters | 82        | 6.5%       | 11        | 4.0%       | 0.103   |
| Went without eating                              | 28        | 5.2%       | 6         | 5.0%       | 0.902   |
| Went without washing up                          | 141       | 11.9%      | 22        | 7.8%       | 0.046   |
| Accidentally wet or soiled clothes               | 313       | 49.9%      | 70        | 44.0%      | 0.184   |
| Made mistake taking medicine                     | 185       | 16.0%      | 48        | 17.3%      | 0.579   |

SOURCE: PHI (2021). For detailed citations and information about PHI's research methodology, please contact [info@phinational.org](mailto:info@phinational.org).

### Growing Demand, Strained Labor Supply

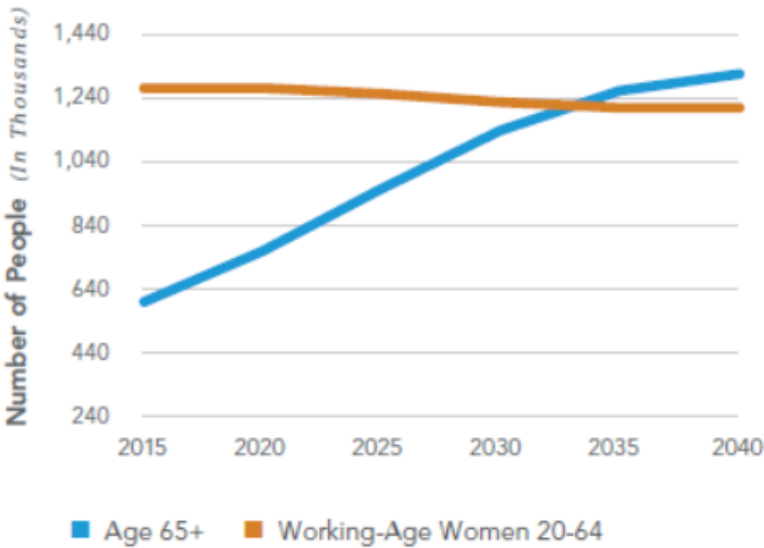
- Significant levels of unmet need
- Widening 'care gap'



# The Rural Direct Care Crisis

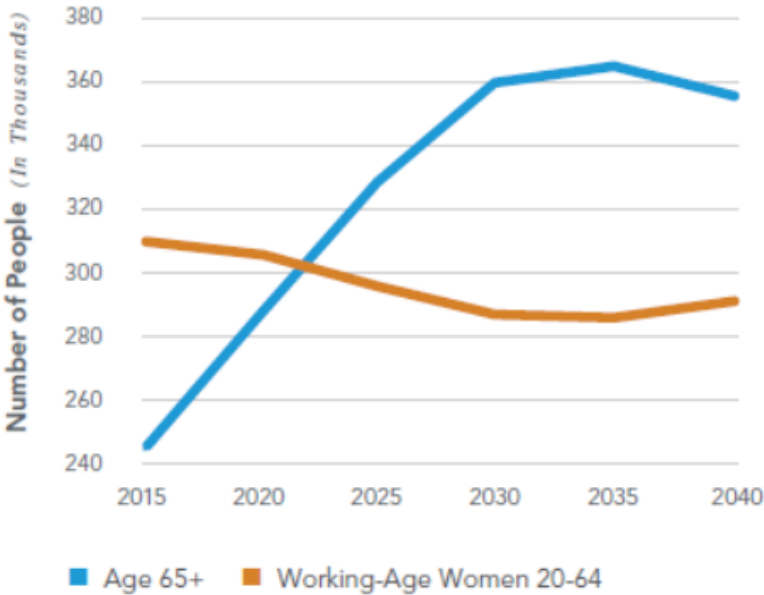


### Non-Rural Minnesota Care Gap



**Source:** Minnesota State Demographic Center. (2014, March). Minnesota County Population Projections by Age and Gender, 2015-2045

### Rural Minnesota Care Gap



**Source:** Minnesota State Demographic Center. (2014, March). Minnesota County Population Projections by Age and Gender, 2015-2045

SOURCE: PHI (2021). For detailed citations and information about PHI's research methodology, please contact [info@phinational.org](mailto:info@phinational.org).

### Growing Demand, Strained Labor Supply

- Significant levels of unmet need
- Widening 'care gap'
- Rising number of direct care job openings
  - Maine: 38k direct care job openings, 2018-2028

# A Role for State Leadership



‘Caring for the Future’ report



## Policy & Practice Recommendations

1. Reform long-term care financing
2. Increase compensation
3. Strengthen training standards and infrastructure
4. Fund direct care workforce interventions
5. Improve data collection
6. Center direct care workers in policy and practice
7. Rectify structural gender and racial inequities
8. Shift the public narrative

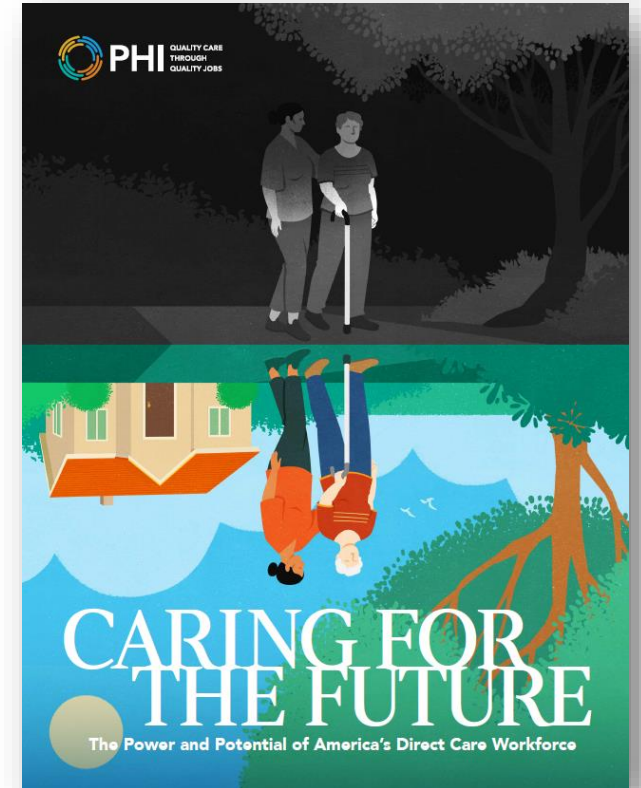


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Home care workers in New York rally for higher wages on March 12. | Erik McGregor/LightRocket via Getty Images

## These workers were left out of the New Deal. They've been fighting for better pay ever since.

Society has undervalued care workers for centuries. Biden has a chance to fix it.

By Ella Nilsen | [ella.nilsen@vox.com](mailto:ella.nilsen@vox.com) | May 18, 2021, 12:40pm EDT

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President Joe Biden's \$2.25 trillion American Jobs Plan contains one particular provision that looks much different from physical infrastructure: \$400 billion to make long-term care cheaper and raise care workers' wages.



Rectify systemic gender and racial inequities for direct care workers

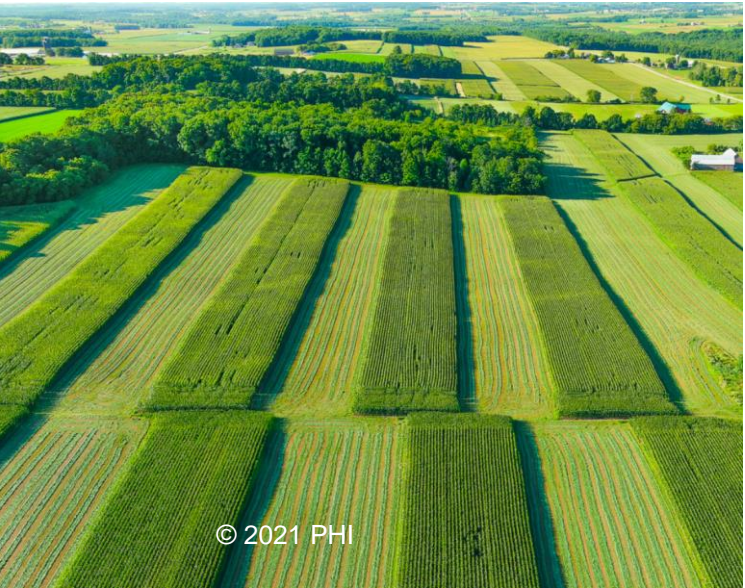


## Key Recommendations

- Develop **strategies to address systemic barriers** and strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion within this job sector
- Build the **evidence base** on equitable direct care workforce interventions
- Bolster **supports for immigrant** direct care workers



State Approaches





# State Approaches: Workforce Reporting Requirements in Texas (Data Collection)





# State Approaches: Home Care Aide Training and Certification in Washington State (Training)



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# State Approaches: Wisconsin's WisCaregivers Career Program (Public Education)





# State Approaches: Minnesota's Direct Support Connect® Registry (Workforce Interventions)





## State Approaches: MercyCare's Innovation Fund in Arizona (Workforce Interventions)





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## HOME HEALTH AIDE

A WORKER-CENTERED CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR HOME HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

### Advocacy Opportunities

- Who's working on this issue in your communities?
- Form a work group or task force focused on direct care workers
- Write an op-ed or letter to the editor on this issue
  - Focus on how it impacts you directly; include data, show trends
- Reach out to your local, state, and federal officials



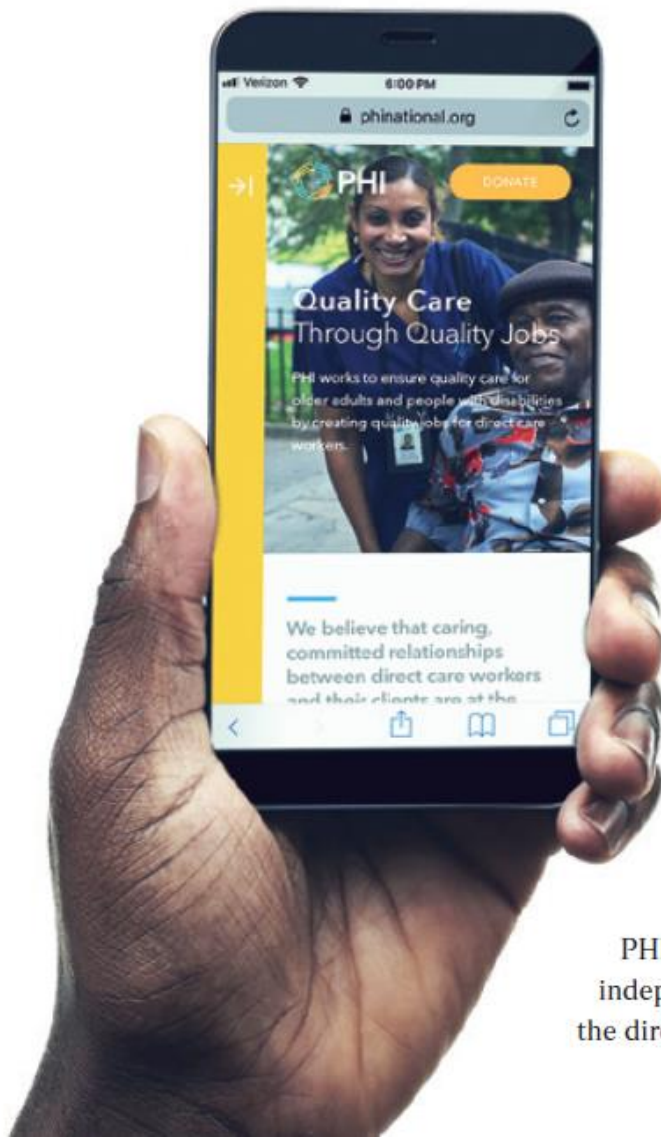
"I think the role of the home health aide should be considered just as important as any other health care role."

# Marisol Riviera

CARE COORDINATOR AT COOPERATIVE HOME  
CARE ASSOCIATES (CHCA), BRONX, NY

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PHI works to transform eldercare and disability services. We foster dignity, respect, and independence for all who receive care, and all who provide it. As the nation's leading authority on the direct care workforce, PHI promotes quality direct care jobs as the foundation for quality care.





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