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

Robert Espinoza, Vice President of Policy, PHI
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
‘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
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
- **43** median age

SOURCE: PHI (2021). For detailed citations and information about PHI’s research methodology, please contact info@phinational.org.
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SOURCE: PHI (2021). For detailed citations and information about PHI’s research methodology, please contact info@phinational.org.
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 POVERTY

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Gender and Racial Inequities

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.
“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
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

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“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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unmet Need</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stayed in without help</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not go to places within own home</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often had to stay in bed</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went without clean laundry</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went without groceries</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went without hot meal</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went without handling bills or financial matters</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went without eating</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went without washing up</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidentally wet or soiled clothes</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made mistake taking medicine</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.579</td>
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Growing Demand, Strained Labor Supply

- Significant levels of unmet need
- Widening ‘care gap’
The Rural Direct Care Crisis

Non-Rural Minnesota Care Gap

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.
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
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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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 | May 18, 2021, 12:40 pm EDT

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.
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: 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.