

THE LONG-TERM CARE WORKFORCE CRISIS: CAREGIVERS NEEDED!

A 2016 REPORT





The Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis: CAREGIVERS NEEDED!

Thousands of Ohioans have long-term care services and supports needs that require not only nursing support but direct care workers as well, to help them perform routine daily activities, such as eating, dressing, and bathing. Other front line staff assist with housekeeping, laundry, and making meals. These caregivers are the backbone of ensuring Ohioans can age with the supports and/or care they need.

Caregiver shortages and turnover rates have grown at an alarming rate. In a survey of over 500 post-acute care providers, results indicated:

- High levels of caregiver shortages and turnover rates among assisted living, nursing home, home care and hospice providers
- Major problems finding applicants and qualified caregivers
- Caregivers leave for other higher paying or less-demanding non-health care positions (retail, fast food)
- Widespread use of overtime, double shifts and other strategies to fill scheduling gaps

THE NEED FOR CAREGIVERS:

For Nursing & Assisted Living facilities in the state:

- 75% have fewer STNA's/Direct Care Workers than planned
- 60% have fewer RN's than planned
- 54% have fewer LPN's than planned

For Home Health & Hospice providers in the state:

- 57% have fewer HHA's than planned
- 33% have fewer RN's than planned
- 48% have fewer LPN's than planned

In addition, front line staff workers in areas such as food service, laundry, and housekeeping are also in short supply.

WHY ARE POSITIONS SO DIFFICULT TO FILL?

- Certain positions have no applicants, a situation reported by:
 - More than 20% of nursing and assisted living facilities
 - More than 40% of home care and hospice providers
- High turnover of caregiver and front line staff is also common. Often employees leave because they do not like working in a long-term care setting or it is simply not a good fit, a situation reported by:
 - Approximately 55% of nursing and assisted living facilities
 - Approximately 25% of home care and hospice providers

Nearly

60% of nursing and assisted living facilities indicated there were either no applicants nor qualified applicants for certain positions

More than

70% of home care and hospice providers indicated there were no qualified applicants for certain positions

WHY IS THERE A CRISIS?

Wage & Benefit Disparity

- Providers reported a median hourly starting wage for STNA's/Direct Care Workers of \$10.15 and \$9.65 for HHA's
- Better pay draws these critical employees away:
 - 7 out of 10 STNA's/Direct Care Workers who left their jobs, left for better pay
 - 8 out of 10 HHA's who left their jobs, left for better pay
- Employers note a lack of "fit" with caregiver role
 - 5 out of 10 STNA's/Direct Care Workers and 1 out of 4 HHA's who left their jobs did so because the long-term care setting wasn't a good fit

HOW PROVIDERS ARE TRYING TO COPE

- Nearly 1 of 5 providers has limited admissions or reduced services - creating access to care issues for individuals and their families
- Due to these shortages, a large number of providers are currently using overtime, double shifts, and other financial strategies to cover the holes/gaps in their staffing schedules. This overuse of current staff can lead to quality of care issues due to fatigue/burn-out of care staff and increase the overall cost of care.



WE CAN ALL AGREE...

- Ohio residents receiving long-term services and supports deserve to be treated with dignity and respect
- Ohioans depend on caregivers who provide care, service, support and safety
- The work of caregiving is often difficult and demanding
- Caregivers are special people who are doing a job that isn't for everyone

THE RESEARCH VALIDATED

- Caregiver shortages are significant, with more than 5,000 openings reported from survey respondents
- Caregivers are leaving because they can get better pay, better benefits, and/or better hours and less demanding work from non-health care employers
- The median starting wage for caregivers is \$.50/hour less than the wage non-healthcare Ohio employers are paying for unskilled, entry level workers
- People simply aren't applying for caregiver jobs and, often even when they do, they are not qualified for a range of reasons: failing drug screens or criminal background checks, lack of training or inadequate preparation, etc.
- Providers rely on overtime, double shifts, and other strategies to meet caregiving needs. These stop-gap approaches are unsustainable and, if 1 in 5 providers have had to limit admissions now, as the aging population increases, the shortage of caregivers will become even more acute.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO ASSURE THERE ARE ENOUGH CAREGIVERS?

- Increase the number of persons interested in caregiving careers
- Enhance how our culture values the work of caregiving
- Reward the work of caregivers with competitive wages and benefits
- Develop all educational opportunities to enhance an understanding of the elderly and caregiving careers
- Create retention strategies and career ladders within caregiving



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