Health Care Workforce Issues in Massachusetts

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The Care-giving Connection – Health Care Consumers and Direct Care Workers

Quality Management

Third-party Investment in Workforce

Support for Employment - and Opportunities for Advancement
Unemployment rate < 3%

People are working...
They’re just not working in health care...

Vacancy Rates > 12%
Downward Spiral

- Poor Quality Jobs
- Staff go elsewhere for work
- Understaffing gets worse; jobs get worse
- More staff leave
Elderly and Women of Care-Giving Age

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program at www.census.gov/population/estimates/state
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Demand:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Supply:</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Growing aging population</td>
<td>• Decreasing workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Higher acuity</td>
<td>• Decreasing 25-54 year old population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Labor intensive</td>
<td>• Lots of better options</td>
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**Price:** Wages, Benefits, Workloads, Training, Opportunities for Advancement, Respect, Overall Working Conditions
What Health Care Pays for Labor –

Poor Quality Jobs:

- **Wages** – half what’s needed for family self-sufficiency
- **Benefits** – many lack health insurance
- **Workloads** – rushed care; over-time; injuries;
- **Training** – inadequate preparation and few opportunities for advancement
- **Overall Working Conditions** – negative work culture
Poor Quality Jobs Affect Quality Care

High turnover and high vacancy rates:

- Disrupt continuity and individualized care
- Cause physical and psycho-social deterioration
  - Malnutrition, dehydration, incontinence, skin breakdown
  - Isolation, loneliness, depression
- Divert resources from care to turnover
- Lose experienced mentors on staff
Framework for Action

• **Sectoral**  
  – In long term care – home and facility-based

• **Intersect health care / workforce systems**  
  – In policy, program, data collection and planning

• **Staged**  
  – Immediate action to stem the downward spiral  
  – Longer term planning, oversight and implementation
Immediate and Longer Term Action

• **Immediate** – stem the downward spiral –
  – Action now to retain and attract direct care workers
  – Long-term care as a Gateway to Employment – support new entrants to the workforce

• **Long-term** – workforce strategy thru 2030 –
  – Workforce Commission
  – Coordinated data analysis and dissemination
Workforce Development

- Pathways to Advancement
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Employer Counseling and Assistance

Health Care System

- Higher wages and benefits
- Upgrade training
- Higher staffing standards
- Culture change

DIRECT CARE WORKERS

Pre-and post-employment education and services:
- Child-care and transportation assistance
- Adult Basic Education

Access to Quality Jobs

- Medicaid Expansion: Expand health care coverage to health care workers

Access to Health Care
## Immediate Action to Stabilize Workforce: Make Direct Care Jobs Competitive in the Labor Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wages</strong></td>
<td>Raise wage levels</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>Provide health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
<td>Improve entry-level training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Create pathways to advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workload</strong></td>
<td>Establish safe staffing levels</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment</strong></td>
<td>Quality management and supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>Assist workers entering the workforce</td>
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</table>
Improving Wages and Benefits

• **Wages** –
  – Wage pass-through
  – Recalibrate wages through step increases
  – Evaluate wages within labor market

• **Health Insurance** –
  – Expand coverage under public programs
  – Subsidize employer-based insurance
  – Maximize CHIP
Training

• Improve curriculum and teaching methods for pre-service and in-service training
• Increase length of preparatory period, add orientation period
• Provide training specific to care needs
• Develop opportunities for advancement
• Provide Adult Basic Ed
Career Pathways in Long Term Care
Opportunities for Advancement

Non-certified LTC staff:
- Kitchen, housekeeping

Pre-certified positions:
- Provide ESoL, GED, literacy
- Post-employment retention services

Certified Aide Plus:
- Senior Aide, Mentor,
- Specialty Skills

Certified Home-maker,
Home Health Aide,
Nursing Assistant

Certified positions:
- Provide work-based training
  in Adult Basic Ed, caregiving and life-skills.
- Post-employment retention services

Certified-plus positions:
- Need work-based skills
  development training and
  post-employment retention services

Scheduler,
Therapy Assistant,
Phlebotomist,
Technician,
Medical Records

Need training programs,
community college, help
to work and study

LPN – RN Therapies

Need community college, tuition assistance and stipends to manage work and study
Workloads and Working Conditions

• Workloads
  – Safe staffing levels
  – Sufficient hours for full-time work

• Working Conditions – Culture Change
  – Inclusive Management
  – Quality Supervision
  – Team approaches
  – Peer support
Gateway to Employment –
Supports for New Workers

• Adequate preparation for successful employment
• Support to overcome barriers to work
• Post-employment counseling and job retention assistance
• Incumbent worker training in Adult Basic Ed and skills upgrades
Efforts Already Underway

- **Legislative** – Joint hearings; proposed budget provides comprehensive approach
- **Stakeholders** – Consumers, labor, and providers are working together within long-term care
- **Provider Practice** – LTC associations are collaborating to develop better management and supervision practices
- **Workforce Development** – Committed to long-term care as priority area
**Longer Term Action: Provide a Workforce as Demand for Health Care Increases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordination and Oversight</th>
<th>Create a Health Care Workforce Commission through 2025</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restructure Workforce Policy</td>
<td>Make health care jobs more competitive in labor market</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Collection; Public Disclosure</td>
<td>Report on labor market and health care utilization data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Fund nursing education and on-the-job skills development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture Change</td>
<td>Improve the quality of the health care work environment</td>
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