

The Long-Term Care Workforce: Can the Crisis be Fixed?

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What is the Problem?

- **Shortage of competent professional and direct care staff across all settings**
- **Instability of workforce leads to**
 - **Service access problems**
 - **Excessive provider costs**
 - **Extreme workloads, inadequate supervision, poorer quality**
- **Future will probably look worse without serious interventions**

Composition of the LTC Workforce

- **Physicians – Medical Directors**
 - **84% PT; 87% are attending physicians**
 - 62% visit once a week or less**
- **Nurse Practitioners**
 - **Number unknown**
- **Administrators**
 - **22,000 to 25,000 licensed nursing home administrators**
- **Nurses**
 - **RNs primarily DONs and ADONs**
 - **LPNs overrepresented in LTC as charge nurses**
- **Direct care workers**
 - **1.4 million nurse aides**
 - **663,000 home health aides**
 - **567,000 personal care/ home care aides**

Factors Influencing Workforce Recruitment and Retention

- **The local economy**
- **Industry stereotyping**
- **Pay and benefits**
- **Poor working conditions**
- **Inadequate/misplaced investments in education and training**
- **Limited data on supply and demand imbalances**
- **Limited dollars to add new personnel**

Long-Term Trends

- **The emerging “care gap”**
- **Shift from institutional to in-home and community-based settings**
- **Decline in disability rates**
- **More ethnically/racially diverse older adults**
- **More highly educated and wealthier older adults**
- **Expansion of consumer-directed service systems**
- **Impact of new technologies**
- **Immigration policy**

Goals for Alleviating Crisis

- **Expand supply of personnel entering field**
- **Create more competitive positions through wage and benefit increases/redesign**
- **Improve working conditions/ quality of jobs**
- **Make larger/smarter investments in formal and continuing education of the LTC workforce**
- **Develop new models of LTC services organization and delivery**
- **Moderate the demand for LTC personnel**

New Research Initiatives

- **Better measures of supply, demand and shortages**
- **Characteristics of the professional LTC workforce**
- **Studies of work design/performance across all staff and settings**
- **Impact of baby boomers on LTC demand**
- **Role of immigration**
- **Relationship between improved working conditions, recruitment and retention and quality outcomes**

Demonstration/Evaluation Opportunities

- **Comprehensive practice interventions**
- **Effects of wage/benefit enhancements**
- **Comprehensive education and training reforms**
- **Organizational and staffing innovations**
- **Bridging LTC and medical care**
- **Impact of payments to family caregivers**
- **Impact of technology**

Reasons to be Hopeful

- **Increased attention to these issues at Federal and State levels**
- **National initiatives (BJBC National Program and potential Australian replication, QIO efforts, IOM study, Eldercare Workforce Alliance)**
- **Recognition of workforce issues in culture change efforts**
- **Exploration of workforce indicators in pay for performance**
- **LTC is a growing field!**
- **IAHSA members can be natural laboratories**