



WORKFORCE CRISIS: AMERICA NEEDS CAREGIVING PROFESSIONALS NOW



Millions of older Americans are at risk of losing access to quality care and services they need. The shortage of caregiving professionals at all levels in long-term care is truly a crisis, and aging services providers across the country need immediate support to expand and enhance the workforce.

The population of the United States is rapidly aging, and the caregiving workforce is steadily dwindling.

BY 2034

there will be more people over age 65 than under age 18,¹ many of whom will need some level of professional long-term care at some point in their lives.²

3.5 MILLION WORKERS

will be needed in long-term services and supports in the U.S. by 2030 to keep up with the aging population;³ the already urgent staffing crisis in aging services was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

OVER 800,000

older adults and people with disabilities remain on Medicaid-funded state waiting lists without caregivers to provide needed home care services.⁴

99%

of U.S. nursing homes are facing staffing shortages⁵

96%

of U.S. assisted living communities are facing staffing shortages⁶

73%

of providers reported trouble finding enough staff to cover shifts⁷

71%

of providers struggled with recruiting new workers⁸

65%

of providers had a hard time finding staff to cover for sick workers⁹



Older adults and their families are losing access to quality long-term care and services every day, and the aging services workforce crisis is only deepening the impact.

327 NURSING HOMES

closed in the U.S. during the pandemic and displaced nearly 13,000 older adults so far. ¹⁰

400 MORE NURSING HOMES

are projected to close in 2022, with thousands more at risk. ¹¹

OLDER ADULTS

will lose access to quality care without the needed caregiver workforce. There are no safety nets in place.

2/3 OF NURSING HOMES

say they will not make it another year. Potential closures may leave no options for families who cannot provide the needed level of care for loved ones. ¹²

The contributing factors to the state of the aging services workforce are complex and many. Key areas of concern are longstanding and dangerously deepening.

LIVING WAGE

Even with an almost 10% increase in 2021, positions like nursing assistant wages are paid well below the living wage. ¹³ Pay must be commensurate to the highly skilled work.

NEW WORKFORCE PIPELINES

Immigration bottlenecks prevent foreign-born nurses from joining the aging services workforce, despite research supporting the high-quality outcomes of immigrant caregivers in nursing homes. ¹⁵

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Significant Medicaid reimbursement gaps contribute to low wages and the 40% – 82% turnover rate of caregivers across long-term care settings. ¹⁴

EDUCATION & TRAINING

More than 91,000 qualified nursing school applicants were turned away in 2021 due to lack of instructors, space, and budget restrictions. ¹⁶

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

The complex barriers to growing the aging services workforce requires more than one solution. It will take an all-of-government approach including the strong advocate voice of LeadingAge.



Increase compensation, benefits, and incentives for aging services professionals



Prepare universal workers to work across settings and across geographies



Reform long-term care and services financing system



Expand the caregiving professional pipeline



Enhance training, education, and career advancement opportunities

Sources: ¹ www.census.gov; ² AHCA/NCAL 2021; ³ healthaffairs.org; ⁴ PHI; ⁵ AHCA/NCAL 2021; ⁶ AHCA/NCAL 2021; ⁷ WCS; ⁸ WCS; ⁹ WCS;

¹⁰ AHCA/NCAL 2022; ¹¹ AHCA/NCAL 2022; ¹² WCS; ¹³ Clifton Larson Allen, 2022; ¹⁴ PHI; ¹⁵ D. Furtado, F. Ortega, 2020;

¹⁶ American Association of Colleges of Nursing, 2020.