



Iowa Health Care Association  
Iowa Center for Assisted Living  
Iowa Center for Home Care

**For Immediate Release:** February 25, 2022

**Contact:** Lori Ristau,  
Senior Vice President, Strategic Communications  
800-422-3106 | [lori@iowahealthcare.org](mailto:lori@iowahealthcare.org)

## Iowa Health Care Association Proposes Solutions to Long-term Care Staffing Crisis

Iowa can overcome its current long-term care workforce crisis by enacting new financial, regulatory and education strategies to create a path forward to building careers in long-term care, according to recommendations in today's *Long-Term Care Workforce Roadmap* report issued by the Iowa Health Care Association (IHCA).

"We are fast approaching a point of no return — where access to long-term care services and supports in Iowa becomes increasingly limited due to the rapidly eroding workforce situation," says Brent Willett, president and CEO of the IHCA. "The bad news is that since the beginning of the pandemic, Iowa nursing home employment has dropped by nearly 12%, and has yet to recover. The good news is that there are smart solutions that can be put in place now to change the path we are on — and to ensure access to quality care for Iowans for generations to come."

The *Workforce Roadmap* cites data from a recent IHCA survey, which shows:

- 18.5% of Iowa long-term care facilities are facing a staffing crisis right now, and 49.7% say their staffing situation is concerning and they need more staff.
- 72% say the primary reason for losing staff has been the inability to compete with more enhanced pay offered elsewhere, and 82% have instituted pay increases, 77% have implemented bonuses, 56% have instituted shift differential pay and 53% have offered sign on bonuses to address staffing challenges.
- 50% are paying additional fees to utilize contract/agency staff to fill staffing gaps. At the same time, 58% say they have lost staff to staffing agencies.
- 91% have had to ask staff to work overtime or take extra shifts. 72% say that burnout and stress has been a contributing factor to workers leaving.
- 44% have either reduced or limited admissions due to staffing shortages.

The new report includes an analysis of the current staffing situation in Iowa long-term care, and provides a three-pronged strategy, leveraging financial, regulatory and educational solutions to address the current workforce shortage problem. Among the recommendations are:

- Adequately fund skilled nursing facility Medicaid, Home- and Community-Based Services Elderly Waiver and home health Low Utilization Payment Adjustment rates.
- Provide assistance programs for long-term care workers, like affordable housing, childcare credits and tax credits.
- Offer retention bonuses for existing staff who have worked in long-term care during the COVID-19 response.
- Support legislation eliminating the use of non-compute agreements for frontline staff members.

[more]

- Permit Certified Nursing Assistance (CNA) students to work in facilities as nurse aide apprentices.
- Expand the use of telehealth for medically appropriate services.
- Expand the scope of support Licensed Practical Nurses provide in home health and assisted living programs.
- Create a long-term care student loan forgiveness loan program.
- Expand CNA training and testing opportunities and provide tuition funding for CNA training.
- Create new Certified Medication Aide training opportunities.

“We know what we need to do,” says Willett. “We have to make the path toward a rewarding health care career more streamlined, identify new resources to make jobs in long-term care more competitive, hold staffing agencies to the same level of accountability as other health care employers and invest in the future of our workforce through education and training opportunities. And we have to do it all at once.”

To view the complete *Iowa Long-term Care Workforce Roadmap* report, visit [iowahealthcare.org/workforce](http://iowahealthcare.org/workforce).

### **About the Iowa Health Care Association**

The Iowa Health Care Association (IHCA) and its divisions, Iowa Center for Assisted Living (ICAL) and Iowa Center for Home Care (IHC) represents over 800 Iowa organizations that provide long-term care to Iowans through nursing facilities, assisted living, residential care, senior living communities and home health agencies.

---

---