



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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Survival Coalition Celebrates National Family Careprovider Month and the Contributions of all Direct Care Workers in Wisconsin

The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations joins other groups across the nation in recognizing the importance of family careproviders in our state's long-term support system for people with disabilities and older adults.

Thousands of Wisconsin residents need help with daily tasks like bathing, dressing, meal preparation, toileting, medical cares, work supports, mobility assistance and more to help them continue to live full and healthy lives in the community instead of in a costlier institutional setting.

“In Wisconsin, families are the backbone of the careproviding industry – making up an estimated 40% of the workforce. Still, we have a workforce crisis,” says Maureen Ryan, Survival Coalition co-chair. “More than 80 percent of people in Wisconsin who need care are telling us in our survey that they can't find enough workers to fill the shifts in their care plan. That leaves people at significant risk.”

Personal Care Aides and Home Health Aides are the second and third highest growth occupations in Wisconsin. However, because personal care and other agencies hiring direct care workers have not seen a substantial increase in the Medicaid rate (the main source of funding for personal cares) over the last ten years, wages for workers have been lagging, impacting the ability to attract and keep a qualified workforce.

“Everyone will require for themselves or end up providing care to someone else at some point in their life,” says Beth Swedeen, Survival Co-chair. “It is time to think about our need to invest in a quality workforce because it is our family members who will need this care. What do we want that care to look like?”

The direct care workforce turnover rate has increased to an estimated 67% - raising costs for careprovider agencies who struggle to stay in business. Agencies in Wisconsin report 3000 positions are unfilled currently while the projected need for workers is expected to increase to 36% by 2020.

“National Family Careprovider Month is a chance to honor the important work of careproviders,” says Kit Kerschensteiner, Survival Co-Chair. “Our state's investment in this workforce has been cost-effective, because it maintains a person's health, while it also preserves their independence and dignity.”

For more information on National Family Careprovider Month and this year's theme, “Take Care to Give Care”, go to: <http://caregiveraction.org/national-family-caregivers-month-theme/>

The Survival Coalition is currently conducting a survey to assess how Wisconsin residents are experiencing the direct care workforce crisis. If you rely on direct care workers, please complete the survey located here: <https://goo.gl/forms/yxURiiSbuSsGOBZK2>

Read the Survival Coalition's biennial budget recommendations to address the direct care workforce crisis: <http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Survival-Budget-Recommendations-2016-Final.pdf>

Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 30 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.