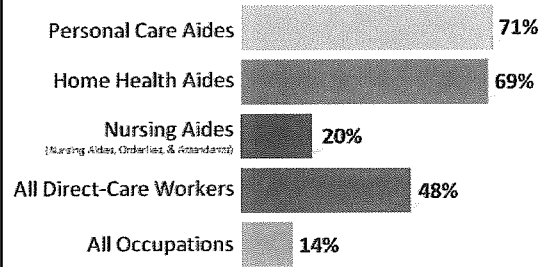


About Direct Care Workers

Many Titles, One Goal, More than 4 Million on the Job: *“Direct care worker” is an umbrella term that includes certified nursing assistants, home health aides, personal care assistants, direct support professionals, home care workers and other similar occupational titles. Direct care workers help care for older adults and individuals with disabilities by providing assistance with activities of daily living (such as eating, bathing, going to the bathroom, dressing, etc.) and certain health care and rehabilitation services. They do this work in a variety of settings, including private homes, community-based residential settings such as group homes and assisted living facilities, and institutional settings such as nursing facilities and hospitals. Today’s direct care workforce includes more than 4 million individuals and is expected to grow to more than 5 million workers by 2020.*

Growing Demand for Direct-Care Workers in the US, 2010-2020



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A Pillar of the Health Care System: Today, direct care workers provide care, services and support to more than 13 million Americans, and that number will grow to 27 million individuals by 2050. Many older adults and individuals with disabilities need daily care, services and/or support to stay on top of treatment and rehabilitation programs, and to live in the setting of their choice with a dignified, high quality of life. *According to the Institute of Medicine, direct care workers are “the linchpin of the formal health care delivery system for older adults.”* Without this linchpin, America’s health care system would quickly grind to a halt.

Key to a Strong Economy: Like teachers, firefighters and police officers, direct care workers provide a vital public service. *By 2020, the direct care workforce will be the largest occupational group in the country. Investing in the direct care workforce will expand the middle class and strengthen the U.S. economy.*

Making a Difference in Families’ Daily Lives: Direct care workers matter in the everyday lives of the people for whom they provide care, services and support. In addition to helping with important tasks of daily living, health care and rehabilitation, direct care workers bring stability, peace of mind, and freedom into their clients’ lives. *About 70 percent of Americans over age 65 will need some kind of long-term care services during their lifetime.* Family and friends play an important role and provide much of this care, but for a variety of demographic reasons, family (also known as “informal”) caregiving is less available than it has been in the past. Parents today have fewer children than their parents did, and with two-worker families the norm, many adults have less flexibility to care for aging parents and family members. Thus, not only do direct care workers make a huge difference for the individuals they care for, their work is essential to the well-being of millions of American families and the vitality of our communities.

Five Million Direct-Care Workers Needed by 2020



Sources: Institute on Medicine (2008), *Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce*, available online at: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2008/Retooling-for-an-Aging-America-Building-the-Health-Care-Workforce.aspx>. PHI (May 2012 Update), *America’s Direct-Care Workforce Facts 3*, available online at: <http://phinational.org/sites/phinational.org/files/phi-facts-3.pdf>. PHI (2012), Charts available online at: <http://phinational.org/policy/chart-gallery>. U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, *National Employment Matrix*, available online at: <http://data.bls.gov/oep/nioem>. U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, *May 2011 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates United States*, available online at: http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The National Clearinghouse for Long Term Care Information, available online at: <http://www.longtermcare.gov>. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Labor (May 14, 2003), *The Future Supply of Long-Term Care Workers in relation to The Aging Baby Boom Generation Report to Congress*, available online at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/tcwork.htm>. For more information, email jbrillortiz@directcarealliance.org.

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