



CALL TO
CARE
NH

A Discussion Guide

ABOUT THIS VIDEO



Call to Care NH is a co-production of NH PBS and the Endowment for Health. This 30-minute program explores the challenges presented as more of us are living longer and the demand for people who provide care is growing faster than the supply. Developed as a companion to the national documentary *America Reframed: CARE*, the New Hampshire program offers a local perspective regarding systemic gaps and creative solutions that could, if we work together and take action, create a better future for older people in New Hampshire and those that care for them.

You can view the video free of charge on the NH PBS website: nhptv.org/calltocare

Care

CARE, by award-winning Director Deirdre Fishel and Producer Tony Heriza, pulls back the curtain on the largely unseen world of paid home care. Through deeply personal stories, *CARE* reveals the humanity and poignancy of direct care work, as well as the challenges faced by elders, their families and their care workers. It also reveals the beginning of a movement to improve how we care—both for the growing number of older people and for those who make their lives livable. *CARE* highlights an issue that affects us all – urban and rural, immigrant and native born, red state and blue. Ensuring quality care for an aging population will require a change in how we value and compensate care workers and how we support families who need their services.

CARE is available for purchase through the film's website: caredocumentary.com. The website also offers a film trailer, resources for hosting a local screening event, and ways to take action.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This discussion guide has been developed to encourage dialogue about the direct care workforce in New Hampshire. It is designed for people who want to use the Call to Care NH video to engage family, friends, peers, colleagues, and communities. Offering good information and a process for facilitation, we hope this guide will assist communities to advance open conversations, foster understanding of each other's views, and expand thinking through active listening.

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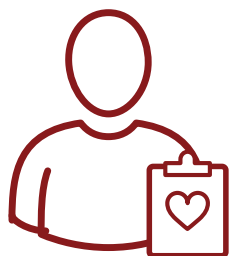
DIRECT CARE WORKERS – CALLED TO CARE

As many of us are living longer and our state's population is increasingly older, New Hampshire is experiencing a growing demand for healthcare and support services. This increase is outpacing our resources, and especially the supply of direct care workers. Direct care workers are the backbone of the long-term services and supports system for older persons who experience chronic illness or disabilities and their families. Research shows that many of us prefer to remain at home as we age. Remaining at home is often only possible if paid caregivers are available for critical assistance. For many of us, at some point, independent and assisted living communities and nursing facilities will play a vital part of our journey. No matter the setting, the services our direct care workers provide are vital to us, our families, our communities, and our economy.

Who are direct care workers?

Direct care workers provide 70 to 80% of the paid, hands-on, long-term care and personal assistance to older Americans living with disabilities and/or chronic illness⁽¹⁾. Whether known as nursing assistants, home-health aides or personal-care assistants, these care workers provide support services such as light housekeeping, meal preparation, and personal care such as dressing, bathing, and toileting. Some workers, such as a Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA), can provide additional services under their licensing. Range-of-motion exercise and blood pressure reading are a few examples. The clear majority of direct care workers (90% nationally) are women, with an average age of 42⁽¹⁾. From a person's home to a nursing home, direct care workers are crucial. Sometimes they are literally what enables an older person to get out of bed in the morning.

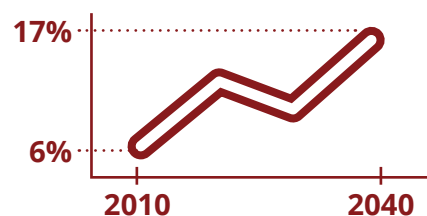
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Why is there a shortage of direct care workers?

Demand for direct care workers is growing because more of us are living longer and the longer we live, the more likely it is that we need support from others with activities of daily life. It is estimated that in New Hampshire, 17% of the population will be over 75 by 2040, up from 6% in 2010⁽⁵⁾. In rural communities, the percent of those over 75 will be even higher⁽⁵⁾.

With historically low unemployment in New Hampshire and increasing demand for workers in all industries, direct care workers are seeking other professions. Low wages are a prime reason. For example, direct care home health workers, earn a median hourly wage of \$10.49 and experience inconsistent work hours, resulting in annual earnings of around \$13,800. Such low wages mean that one in four direct care home health workers lives below the federal poverty line and over half qualify for public assistance⁽²⁾. Despite seeking more hours, fewer than one-third work full-time (35 or more hours) in a typical week. To make up for a lack of full-time work, many juggle more than one job.



In New Hampshire, 17% of the population will be over 75 by 2040, up from 6% in 2010. ⁽⁵⁾

Low wages, meager benefits, and marginal career advancement opportunities are characteristic of this workforce. Home health, assisted living, and nursing facilities all face challenges recruiting and retaining sufficient direct care staff. Some research cites up to 60% of home health aides leaving their job after less than 1 year⁽³⁾. In assisted-living settings, staff turnover average is 42%.

A stable and well-prepared direct care workforce is critical to ensure the health and well-being of

all of us as we age, regardless of where in our communities we age. Our state needs to address these challenges and avoid a crisis that will put older people and families at risk.

Why is this important to our families and communities?

Today in New Hampshire, more than 170,000 of us are family caregivers, providing support to our loved ones. Many of us are balancing unpaid caregiving with employment and other household responsibilities. Direct care workers are a critical resource and a lifeline to our families in maintaining this balance. Workforce shortages mean that older adults won't get the help they need to age with dignity. Nationally, 36% of older adults who need help with personal care, medications, and meals, aren't getting it⁽⁴⁾. Without a sufficient supply of direct care workers to support them, family caregivers will exit the workforce to care for loved ones, creating financial risks for families and increasing workforce shortages for New Hampshire's employers in all sectors.

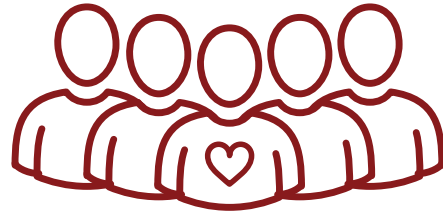


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What can be done to address the direct care workforce shortage?

The direct care workforce shortage did not occur overnight. In fact, many thoughtful, dedicated advocates have been working to raise awareness and take action for more than a decade.

170,000+



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There are several solutions to address workforce shortages across the health care system proposed by groups such as the NH Coalition for the Direct Care Workforce (2009), the Governor's Commission on Health Care and Community Support Workforce (2016), and Commission to Evaluate the Direct Care Workforce and Preparedness of Long-Term Care and Support Services for Aging Adults with Dementia or Other Cognitive Brain Injuries (2017).

The following strategies are salient themes:

- Reduce government barriers and delays related to the State's licensure approval and criminal background checks and explore reciprocity in the New England States;
- Continue to enhance current educational programs, develop new and innovative training programs, and enhance retraining programs from home care to assisted living to nursing facilities;
- Ensure reimbursement rates support wages that reflect the current and competitive wage scale for a healthy economy in New Hampshire; and
- Establish minimal standards for staffing, training, and environment, including a standard for a therapeutic activity program for all facilities who advertise memory care, cognition-deficit, or brain-injury care in New Hampshire.

PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL SCREENING

Planning a strategic and well-attended event takes effort. It can be a simple gathering of friends, family, and/or colleagues, or can be a much larger community-wide event. The event can include watching the video and discussing concepts and ideas to implement local changes.



Planning Checklist

- What are your goals?** What would you like the audience to discuss? What specific actions would you like the audience to take?
- What kind of event?** Is this a large or small event, a conference, a workshop?
- Find local co-sponsors.** Are there other organizations in your community who are working on these issues? Are there key professions/agencies that would be important partners? Are there business owners, members of the clergy, law enforcement, or other community leaders who would like to co-host?
- Determine location.** Local community centers, churches, and schools often have free or low-cost space available.
- Promotion.** Use email lists, social media, community message boards, etc. to get the word out effectively.

Before the Event

- Preview the video.** It is important to process one's own feelings about the video in advance.
- Consider your audience and facilitation needs.** Bring in an experienced facilitator to help during the dialogue. Bring in people who are knowledgeable about the issues.
- Tie the video to local context.** The most valuable conversations help audiences connect the dots between their story, their lives, and local/state concerns.
- Be prepared to direct people to resources.** Questions may come up for audience members; it is a good idea to know where resources exist to direct people.

FACILITATING A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

At the Screening

- Explain the purpose of the conversation** and share why everyone is gathered together.
- Set ground rules.** Discussions are most productive when people feel safe, comfortable, and challenged. Ground rules, like these, can help create the right conditions for success:
 - Everyone deserves a chance to speak. Speak up if you've been quiet, or quiet down if you've talked a lot.
 - Allow people to "pass." Everyone has the right not to speak.
 - Listen to others. Don't interrupt people who are speaking.
- **Privacy matters.** Everything said in the group should remain in the group unless you have made a different agreement.
- **Use "I" statements.** Speak only for yourself and don't speak for others.
- **Suspend your judgment.** A choice you would not have made does not make it a wrong choice. Be generous as you listen to other people's experiences.
- **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask for more information. No question is stupid!

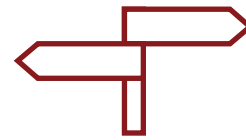
During the Discussion

- ❑ **Take a moment to reflect.** Refrain from digging into the issues too quickly.
- ❑ **Connect it back to the story.** Acknowledge the personal feelings and experiences, then connect them back to the video—more neutral territory.
- ❑ **Point them in the right direction.** By the end of the program, the audience will likely want to get involved. Be sure to offer clear steps they can take to do so.

Conversation Starters

Allow audience members time to process what they have watched before diving into the issues. The following prompts are designed to allow audience members a chance to respond to the content of the video. Sometimes it helps to suggest audience members begin by talking to their neighbors before initiating a large group conversation.

- What is your immediate reaction to the program?
- Is there a comment or moment that stood out for you? If so, which one and why?
- What person(s) in the program could you most relate to and why?
- What new information did you learn from the program?



Point people in the right direction – offer clear steps that audience members can take.

Discussion Questions

Below are sample questions to use to engage audiences in conversation.

- What impact has the shortage of direct care workers had in your community?
- How does the shortage of direct care workers effect local businesses in your area?
- How is your community planning for the long-term care needs of older persons—in their homes, assisted living facilities, and nursing home facilities?
- What legislative or policy changes would you like to see enacted to help reduce the direct care workforce shortage?
- What impacts do you foresee of immigration policy, tax policy, education policy, etc. at the state and national level having or likely to have on the direct workforce shortage?
- What measures can we take to reduce the number of people who leave direct care work?

TAKE ACTION

Hosting a viewing of Call to Care NH is a great way to engage your community and begin a conversation about change.

What other actions will you take?

Use Your Voice

- Share information at a regional meeting or event.
- Write an article or op-ed for your local newspaper.
- Host a lunch and learn at your workplace.

Make a Connection

- Learn more about resources in your community:
 - ServiceLink Aging and Disability Resource Centers: <https://www.servicelink.nh.gov/>
 - Local Welfare Officer: <https://www.nh.gov/municipal/index.html>
- Join an effort to address the direct care workforce shortage:
 - New Hampshire Alliance for Healthy Aging: <http://nhaha.info/>
 - AARP NH: <http://local.aarp.org/concord-nh/>
 - Elder Rights Coalition: <http://www.ercnh.org/>
 - Caring Across Generations: <https://caringacross.org/>
- Reach out to other organizations working to address the direct care workforce shortage:
 - Home Care Association of New Hampshire <http://homecarenh.org/>
 - New Hampshire Health Care Association <https://www.nhhca.org/>
 - LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire <http://www.leadingagemenh.org/>
 - PHI: Quality Care through Quality Jobs: <https://phinational.org/>

Take a Stand

- Share information with opinion leaders and policy makers.
- Ask policy makers how they are supporting older persons and the direct care workforce.
- Partner with advocacy organizations to strengthen the direct care workforce system.



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ENDNOTES

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