



Advocates for Ohio's Future
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Strengthen Ohio's Direct Service Workforce

Problem

There are shortages of direct service workers in Ohio's health care workforce, particularly in primary care, behavioral health, long term care and home care. Shortages lead to inefficiencies and poor health outcomes. The current shortage will be exacerbated as the direct service workforce is expected to grow more than any other sector in the next five years, outpacing retail, teachers and fast food workers.

Compounding this challenge is high turnover among direct service workers. According to a 2013 Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) survey, developmental disability direct support professional turnover in Ohio was at 47%. Studies show turnover is attributable to low pay, long hours, restrictive work rules, lack of benefits and lack of sick days. Turnover is also costly for business owners. Exit costs include recruiting, hiring, orientation, training, lost productivity, and administrative cost. Turnover also leads to lower quality of service, customer dissatisfaction, and health and safety risks to the individual receiving services.

Ohio will continue to face a shortage of direct support professionals, independent providers, home health aides and personal care assistants unless Ohio significantly improves the compensation, training, and work conditions of these workers.

Purpose

Our purpose is to recommend budget and policy solutions to create a viable and sustainable workforce by improving direct service workers' pay, benefits, training, supervision, work environment and impact on people they support. We support better outcomes of care, improved health of the general population and more efficient use of resources. We lack effective systems to deal with the ever-increasing demand and need to ensure that the workforce will be there when needed. We believe that families and communities will be stronger with the creation of a viable and sustainable, high quality direct service workforce.

Outcomes

We will achieve a sustainable, high quality direct service workforce by meeting the following outcomes:

1. Increased wages and benefits for direct service workers
2. System reform that shifts the focus from activities to outcomes with savings from efficiencies reinvested in the direct service workforce
3. Improved worker satisfaction and lower turnover rates

Advocates for Ohio's Future is a statewide coalition of over 450 local and statewide organizations that promotes health and human service budget and policy solutions so that all Ohioans live better lives.