



Advocacy Day 2025 Talking Points

Direct Care Worker Shortage: Unfilled shifts affect care and impacts family members

- **The Direct Care Workforce Shortage Demands a Coordinated Response**

- The direct care workforce shortage has reached crisis levels, and we urge the Mayor and relevant District Agencies to recognize and take immediate action to address this situation.
- Issues exacerbating the direct care workforce shortage cross multiple agencies including DC Health, Board of Nursing, DOES, OSSE/HELC, and more.

Recommendation: Empower DC Government officials to work across relevant agencies to ensure a whole-of-government response to the workforce shortage, incorporating best practices from other states.

- **Increasing Compensation is Essential to Keeping our Workers**

- Personal Care Aides earn an average starting wage of \$19.70/hour, well below the MIT-calculated living wage of \$23.90/hour in DC.
- 48% of direct care workers leave due to insufficient pay, and 34% cite a lack of benefits.

Recommendation: Provide dedicated funding for the wage increases contained in the Certified Nurse Aide Amendment Act which passed in October 2024 (*120% of the Living Wage or Minimum Wage*).

- **The Certified Nurse Aide Amendment Act of 2024 Must be Implemented Effectively & Without Delay**

- DC CNAs are now allowed to work in home care, but change cannot occur without guidance from DC Health.
- Legislation allowed Virginia and Maryland CNAs to have expedited approval to work in DC, but guidance from DC Health is needed.
- The DC CNA and DC HHA licenses will be combined into one universal credential, however no timeline has been provided by DC Health.
- Legislation created an advisory group to advise DC Health on implementation, details have not yet been provided by DC Health.

Recommendation: Provide additional oversight of DC Health and the Board of Nursing to ensure rapid implementation of the Certified Nurse Aide Amendment Act of 2024 amidst a workforce crisis.

- **Invest in an Improved Training Pipeline to Meet Growing Demand**

- Over 3,000 direct care job openings are projected annually from 2021–2028.
- Despite high demand, the number of Home Health Aide training programs has dropped from 6 in 2021 to only 2 in 2025 due to burdensome regulations.
- Existing training providers are restricted by DC Health contracts with 3rd parties like Credentia, barriers to hiring nurse instructors, and DC Health regulations on testing

Recommendation: Direct relevant agencies to work with Training Providers to adjust regulations that limit their capacity and ability to efficiently graduate and test participants. Pass the “District of Columbia Nurse Licensure Compact Authorization Act”, reducing the staffing burdens currently impacting training providers.

Partners:

1199SEIU
United Healthcare Workers East

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