



DC COALITION ON LONG TERM CARE

DC Coalition on Long Term Care Fact Sheet

Care That Sustains Our Community

Strengthening Washington, DC's Long-Term Care Workforce

Winter 2026

Why Long-Term Care Matters

Every day, thousands of DC residents depend on long-term care to live safely and with dignity—at home, in assisted living, and in nursing facilities.

This care is delivered by skilled, compassionate workers who support our neighbors, families, and communities.

When care is strong, communities are strong.

"There are four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers."

— Rosalynn Carter

The Challenge

Washington, DC is facing a growing **long-term care (LTC) workforce crisis** that threatens access to care for aging adults and people with disabilities across the full continuum—**home care, assisted living, and nursing facilities**.

- Shortages of **Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs), Home Health Aides (HHAs), and the variety of direct care workers** delay services, reduce quality of care, and increase preventable hospitalizations and institutionalization.
- Families are forced into unpaid caregiving roles, creating emotional and financial strain.
- Workers face **low wages, limited benefits, inadequate training access, and few career pathways**, leading to burnout and high turnover.
- The workforce is **predominantly women of color and immigrants**, making this both a **public health crisis and an economic and racial equity issue**.

About the DC Coalition on Long Term Care

The **DC Coalition on Long Term Care** is a **30-year-old alliance** of consumers, advocates, providers, and workforce partners committed to ensuring DC residents can **age with dignity in their homes and communities**.

- Network of **300+ organizations and leaders**
- Partners include **AARP, LeadingAge, DCHCA, SEIU 1199** and others
- Regularly provides **DC Council testimony**, collaborates with agencies, and works with elected officials and senior staff
- Website: **dclongtermcare.org**

Who Is Impacted

- **Older adults & people with disabilities:** Loss of independence, delayed care, forced institutionalization
- **Low-income residents:** Disproportionate impact due to Medicaid staffing shortages
- **Families:** Unpaid caregiving, financial stress, lost wages
- **Workers:** High responsibility, low pay, few advancement opportunities

This is a **systemic workforce failure**, not an individual one.

Key Policy Priorities

1. **Expand Medication Aide Training**
 - Medication Aides are critical in residential and assisted living settings.
 - **DC has not approved a Medication Aide training provider in over four years**, limiting care capacity and worker advancement.
 - Action needed: **Board of Nursing approval of qualified training providers.**
2. **Fully Implement the Certified Nurse Aide Amendment Act (CNAAA)**
 - **Passed unanimously** and became law on **December 12, 2024.**
 - Addresses workforce protections, training standards, quality oversight, and wages.
 - Law without implementation **does not improve care or stabilize the workforce.**
 - Requires sustained oversight, coordination, and funding.
3. **Build Training & Career Pathways**
 - Retention depends on **advancement opportunities and wage growth.**
 - DC lacks a comprehensive community college or healthcare career pipeline.
 - Near-term solutions include partnerships with:
 - **PGCC, Montgomery College, NOVA, and adult charter schools**
 - Long-term solution: **substantial investment in post-secondary healthcare training capacity.**
 - **DC is the only big city in the country without a comprehensive community college or career and technical training center for adults.**

Funding & Wages

- **Wages are the single strongest predictor of workforce stability.**
- Without competitive pay, workers leave for retail or hospitality jobs.

- The CNAANA includes wage provisions that remain **unfunded**.
- DC has precedent:
 - **Paid Equity Fund** for early childhood educators (2021)
- Care workers deserve **equitable wages**, potentially supported through:
 - Higher Medicaid reimbursement
 - Progressive revenue options
- **Budget choices reflect values**. These workers are ess

Equity, Dignity, and Economic Mobility

- Long-term care workers have historically been excluded from labor protections.
- Today, they are **essential to DC's economy and public health infrastructure**.
- Equity-centered policies can address:
 - Worker protections
 - Immigration and language barriers
 - Career advancement
 - Family economic stability

The Path Forward

Solving DC's long-term care workforce crisis requires **leadership, funding, and collaboration**.

Elected officials must commit to:

- Full implementation of existing laws
- Cross-agency coordination
- Fair wages and career pathways
- Ongoing partnership with the DC Coalition on Long Term Care

Care work is essential work.

A stable workforce means stronger families, healthier communities, and dignity for all.

For more information contact: Neil Richardson, Coordinator, at
ltccoalition@homecarepartners.org