



# The Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis: A 2016 Report

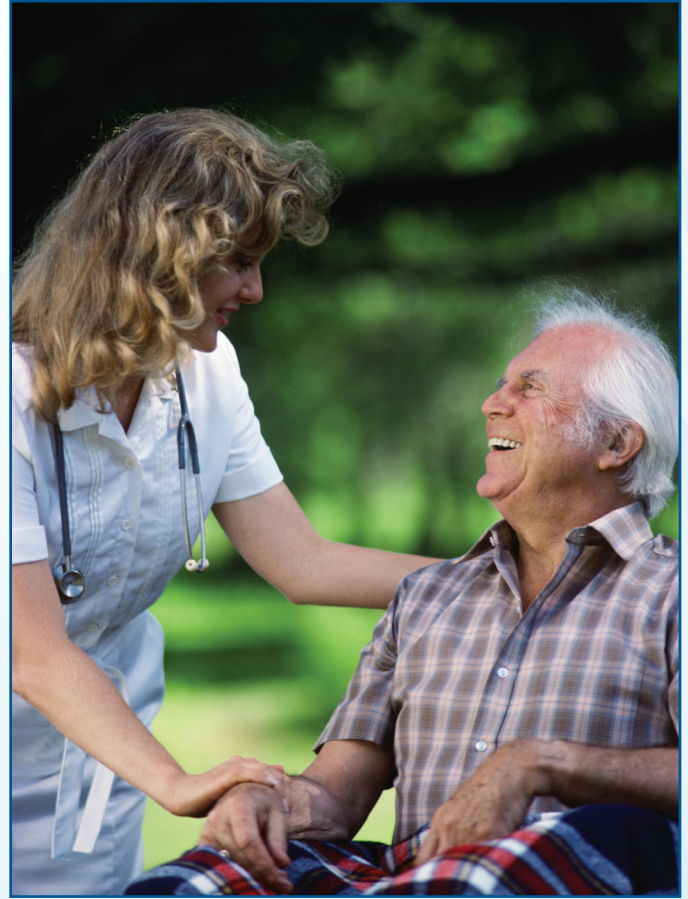
Caregiver vacancy rates, long a concern for Wisconsin long-term and residential care providers, have reached crisis levels. In the largest survey of long-term and residential care providers to date, responses from 689 providers revealed:

- High levels of caregiver vacancy rates in assisted living and nursing homes
- Major problems finding applicants and qualified caregivers
- Significant wage disparity between people working as trained personal caregivers and unskilled entry level workers taking jobs at gas stations, big-box stores, and fast food restaurants
- Lost admissions due to lack of caregivers
- An exodus of caregivers to jobs outside of healthcare
- Widespread use of overtime, double shifts and other strategies to fill scheduling gaps

The results of the survey, together with data from the Wisconsin Office of Caregiver Quality showing a decline in persons seeking or renewing certification as nursing assistants (CNA), expose a significant workforce crisis facing providers caring for people in need of long-term and residential care.

# The Need for Caregivers!

- More than **87,000** Wisconsin residents live in 4,102 long-term and residential care facilities<sup>1</sup>
- Residents living in long-term and residential care facilities rely on an estimated 73,700 caregivers<sup>2</sup>
- The number of Wisconsin residents living in long-term and residential care facilities has **grown 18%** since 2003<sup>1</sup>
- In the next 30 years, the ratio of Wisconsin residents age 65 and older to the entire state population will grow from 1 in 7 to 1 in 4<sup>3</sup>
- By the year 2022 the need for personal care workers is projected to **increase 26.4%**<sup>4</sup>



## Scope of the Crisis

- Average caregiver vacancy rates of 14.5%, with 1 in 4 providers experiencing rates **20% and higher**
- An estimated **11,500 vacant caregiver positions** in Wisconsin long-term and residential care facilities

# 1 in 7

Caregiving staff positions are unfilled ...why?

More than **30%** of providers felt they were unable to compete with other employers

Nearly **50%** had no applicants for vacant caregiver positions

**70%** said there were no qualified applicants for caregiver openings

# Why Is There A Crisis?

## Wage and benefit disparity

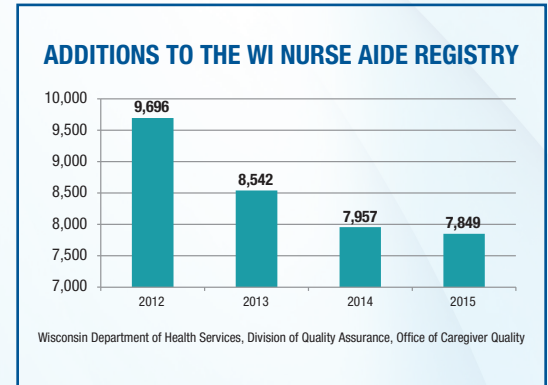
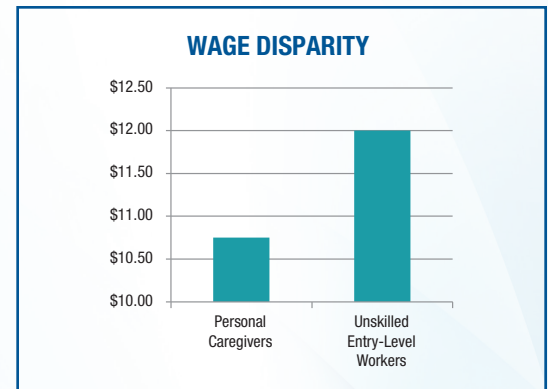
- Providers reported a median hourly starting wage for personal caregivers of \$10.75 compared to \$12.00 for local, non-health care employers seeking unskilled, entry level workers
- **4 of 5 personal caregivers** who took jobs outside of health care left for better pay, better benefits and/or better hours

## Caregivers are leaving

- 56% of providers had personal caregivers leave for jobs outside health care
- An estimated **10,600 personal caregivers** may have left for jobs outside of health care in the past year

## People are not seeking certification as caregivers

- Between 2012 and 2015, **24% fewer people** applied for CNA certification<sup>5</sup>
- The number of people renewing their CNA certification declined by 5,431 between 2012 and 2015<sup>5</sup>, a drop of 24%



# How Providers Are Trying to Cope

## Limiting admissions

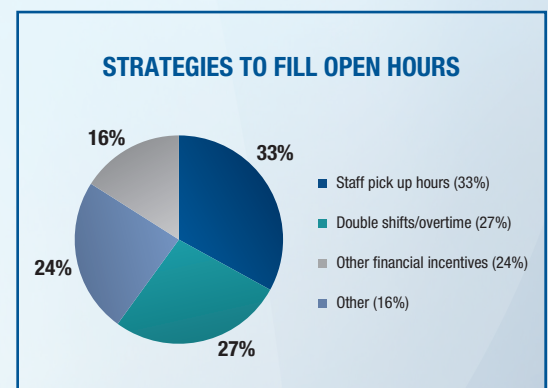
- **18% limited admissions** in the past year, limiting access to long-term and residential care services to an estimated 5,335 individuals because of caregiver shortages

## Limiting benefits

- More than 50% of providers do not offer health insurance to part-time staff
- **1 in 4 providers** had at least 10 employees on BadgerCare Plus, the state's Medicaid health insurance program for low-income persons

## Relying on current caregivers to fill open hours

- **84%** of the time providers use overtime, double shifts, and/or other strategies to fill open hours which are expensive and can lead to caregiver burnout



## We all can agree...

- Wisconsin residents living in long-term and residential care facilities deserve to be treated with dignity and respect
- Residents depend on the caregivers who work in these facilities
- Caregivers are responsible for the care, service, support, and safety of residents
- The work of caregiving is often difficult and demanding
- Caregivers are special people – it's not a job everyone can do

## The research validated what we've been hearing from providers:

- Caregiver vacancy rates are reaching crisis proportions, with as many as 11,500 openings across Wisconsin
- The median starting wage for personal caregivers is \$1.25 per hour less than the wage non-health care employers are paying for unskilled, entry level workers
- Caregivers are leaving because they can get better pay, better benefits, and/or better hours from non-health care employers
- People simply aren't applying for caregiver jobs
- Providers rely on overtime, double shifts and other strategies to fill open schedules. These stop-gap approaches are unsustainable and ultimately counterproductive if they lead to caregiver burnout.

## What must be done to assure there are enough caregivers?

- Increase the number of people entering caregiving careers
- Value the work of caregiving
- Recognize and celebrate career caregivers
- Reward the work of caregivers with competitive wages and benefits

## For more information about *The Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis: A 2016 Report*, contact:

- LeadingAge Wisconsin: John Sauer, 608.255.7060, (jsauer@leadingagewi.org)
- Wisconsin Health Care Association/Wisconsin Center for Assisted Living: John Vander Meer, 608. 257.0125, (john@whcawical.org)
- Wisconsin Assisted Living Association: Jim Murphy, 608.288.0246, (jmurphy@ewala.org)
- Residential Services Association of Wisconsin: Dan Drury, 414.322.8979 (ddrury@o4cg.com)



## Glossary

Caregivers include registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, persons with CBRF certification, resident assistants, and other direct and personal care workers  
Long-term and residential care providers include adult family homes, community based residential facilities, residential care apartment complexes, and skilled nursing facilities  
Assisted living includes adult family homes, community based residential facilities, and residential care apartment complexes  
Personal caregivers include certified nursing assistants, persons with CBRF certification, resident assistants, and other direct and personal care workers

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Quality Assurance, *State of Assisted Living – CY 2014*, March, 2015
- <sup>2</sup> LeadingAge Wisconsin, Wisconsin Health Care Association / Wisconsin Center for Assisted Living, Wisconsin Assisted Living Association, Residential Services Association of Wisconsin, *2016 Workforce Survey*, March, 2016
- <sup>3</sup> Wisconsin Department of Administration, Demographic Services Center, *Wisconsin's Future Population, Projections for the State, Its Counties and Municipalities, 2010 – 2040*, December, 2013
- <sup>4</sup> Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Office of Economic Advisors, *Wisconsin Long Term Occupational Employment Projections, 2012-2022*, August 2014
- <sup>5</sup> Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Quality Assurance, Office of Caregiver Quality