

For Immediate Release

**AMERICA FACES CAREGIVING CRISIS:
ONE MILLION NEW DIRECT-CARE WORKERS NEEDED BY 2016**

*National Health Care Worker Advocacy Group PHI Reports on
Rapid Growth in Demand for Direct-Care Workers*

Bronx, NY, May 27, 2008—By the year 2016, America will need 1 million additional direct-care workers to care for its rapidly growing elderly population. Already facing difficulty recruiting workers for these low-wage occupations, elders and people with disabilities fear that without support from policymakers to improve jobs, there will not be enough workers to assist them.

Sarah Harrison, a 79-year old resident of Lansing, MI, has used Michigan's self-help program for the past 14 years for personal assistance including cooking, cleaning, laundry and the monitoring of medications. Harrison, who has a variety of medical conditions including high blood pressure, osteoarthritis and congenital heart failure, says that it's difficult holding onto her caregivers.

"At one point, I would lose a worker every three months. Some workers would tell me right away that they may have to leave if they find another job that pays better with health insurance," Harrison said. "The only real ways to hold-onto caregivers is to pay them better and offer health insurance," she added.

A new report from PHI, a national nonprofit that supports quality long-term care, confirms what consumer and long-term care providers already know: the rapid demand for services is outpacing the growth of the labor force. This care gap is dramatically revealed in PHI's data analysis summarized in a new fact sheet, Occupational Projections for Direct Care Workers, 2006-2016:

- ***By 2016, the direct-care workforce is expected to grow to 4 million, eclipsing registered nurses, teachers, cooks and food prep workers, fast food and counter workers, waiters and waitresses, and cashiers.***
- ***Overall demand for direct-care workers is projected to increase by 34 percent over the next decade while the number of women aged 25-54—the main labor pool from which these workers are drawn—is projected to increase by less than 1 percent.***
- ***Personal and Home Care Aides and Home Health Aides are projected to be the second- and third fastest-growing occupations in the country between 2006 and 2016.***

-More-

These new projections speak to the historical proportions that the direct-care workforce has now assumed,” said Dr. Dorie Seavey, PHI Director of Research and the report’s author. “This workforce can no longer be an afterthought in policy discussions.”

The report also shows that the majority of direct-care workers are now employed in home and community-based settings, and this trend will continue. PHI contends that this is a positive development but America is not prepared to care for its growing population of elders and people with disabilities. It’s essential that state and federal policymakers develop workforce policy that supports growing demand for person-centered services delivered at home.

“In order to meet demand during the next decade, the quality of direct-care jobs, particularly those in home and community-based settings, must be improved,” said Dr. Seavey. “Policymakers and employers must work together to make these jobs competitively attractive as compared to other occupations.”

The full report, *Facts 1: Occupational Projections for Direct-Care Workers 2006-2016*, is available at www.PHInational.org.

About PHI: PHI works to improve the lives of people who need home or residential care—by improving the lives of the workers who provide that care. For more information, visit www.PHInational.org.

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