

7 Recommendations to Strengthen New York's Home Care Workforce

Every day across New York, more than 330,000 home care workers provide essential support to older adults and people with disabilities. Although their positive impact on both care and quality of life is indisputable, these workers continue to struggle for recognition and adequate compensation. Given the rising demand for home care services, coupled with challenges in recruiting and retaining home care workers, New York faces a growing workforce shortage—making it more important than ever to improve home care jobs and strengthen the home care workforce.

Here are seven policy recommendations for investing in home care jobs—for the benefit of workers, older adults, people with disabilities, and their families.

1 Convene a Workforce Shortage Taskforce

The Challenge: New York faces a growing workforce shortage in home care, spurred by poor job quality and the growth in the number of older adults.

What New York Needs: A strategic plan to build the workforce and meet growing demand for home care services, particularly in rural areas where the shortage is most acute.

What PHI is Doing: We are calling on the state to convene a “Workforce Shortage Taskforce” to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses the worsening workforce shortage.

2 Create a Home Care Jobs Innovation Fund

The Challenge: Home care providers struggle to find and keep workers, which makes it difficult for older adults, people with disabilities, and their families to access care.

What New York Needs: Innovative approaches that successfully recruit and retain home care workers.

What PHI is Doing: We are promoting a “Home Care Jobs Innovation Fund,” which would support pilot projects that strengthen the state’s home care workforce.

3 Effectively Implement the Advanced Home Health Aide Occupation

The Challenge: A new advanced role for home care workers in New York holds promise for workers and their clients—but only if it’s implemented properly.

What New York Needs: To effectively implement the new advanced home health aide occupation, which will allow these aides to administer certain medications with additional training.

What PHI is Doing: Following our successful joint advocacy for this new role, we are now informing its implementation, while calling for funding to cover costs such as training, higher wages for advanced aides, and clinical supervision.

4 Establish a Public Home Care Advocate

The Challenge: The many federal, state, and local laws that shape home care jobs in New York are complex, ever-changing, and confusing to workers and employers alike.

What New York Needs:

A centralized resource for home care workers and providers to learn about their rights and responsibilities, mirroring the Paid Care Division established in New York City in 2016.

What PHI is Doing: We're advocating for the state to create a public home care advocate that would help workers and employers navigate evolving labor laws, as well as connect workers to training opportunities, assist them with accessing public benefits, and provide other employment supports.

5 Ensure Adequate Reimbursement for Home Care Services

The Challenge: Under New York's current Medicaid reimbursement rates, many home care providers

struggle to cover costs and invest in higher job quality for their workers.

What New York Needs: Medicaid reimbursement rates that cover the full and actual cost of providing home care services and incentivize innovation.

What PHI is Doing: We're calling for the state to set minimum requirements for payments from Medicaid managed care plans to home care providers, and to create incentives for investing in the workforce through improved compensation, training, advancement opportunities, and other innovations.

6 Account for the Value of Home Care

The Challenge: As value-based payment (VBP) gains traction in health care, the industry is unclear on how best to incentivize quality and save costs in home care.

What New York Needs: A VBP system that improves and rewards home care by integrating measures of care quality, quality of life, and workforce quality, among others.

What PHI is Doing: We're studying successful models of VPB in long-term care and disseminating promising strategies—as well as envisioning new ones—that could enhance New York's VPB approach to home care and leverage the worker role.

7 Track Home Care Workforce Dynamics

The Challenge: Efforts to minimize the home care workforce shortage should be data-driven, but there are considerable gaps in knowledge about this workforce.

What New York Needs: A robust system for tracking the size and stability of the home care workforce and the quality of home care jobs, as well as the quality of services.

What PHI is doing: We're drawing on lessons learned from other states to inform conversations with New York's Department of Health and Department of Labor about building the state's data collection system.

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BY THE NUMBERS: HOME CARE WORKERS IN NEW YORK

330,660

Number of Home Care Workers

125,000

NEW JOBS
Expected Growth
(2014-2024)

93%

of Home Care Workers are Women

67%

of Home Care Workers are Immigrants

\$18,000

Median Annual Income

19%

Workers Live in Poverty

Source: PHI. "Workforce Data Center." Last modified 11/10/17. <https://phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/>.

PHI works to transform eldercare and disability services. We foster dignity, respect, and independence—for all who receive care, and all who provide it. As the nation's leading authority on the direct care workforce, PHI promotes quality direct care jobs as the foundation for quality care.