



**Baystate
Health**



University of
Massachusetts
UMASS Medical School

Armbrook Village Pchc: Support for Low-Wage Direct Care Workers

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PURCH Population Health Clerkship

The PURCH track strategically aligns medical education experiences with the priority health needs of low resourced communities of Western MA.

This PCHC in Assisted Living Memory Care at Armbrook Village builds on our discussion of the healthcare needs of older adults and people with dementia and aligns with addressing disparities faced by eldercare workers.

Introductions

We are medical students, PA students, and pharmacists working at an assisted living memory care facility studying the experience of people with dementia, and how to best support their paid and unpaid caregivers.

State the case you wish to make

- People with dementia require structure, calm, and consistency to thrive in their environment. This ideal environment is created by residential care assistants (RCAs). As the RCAs spend the most one-on-one time with people with dementia providing support for their activities of daily living, they are often the source of information guiding medical care.
- This role can be emotionally and physically exhausting. 81% of RCAs are women and more than 50% of home health aides do not have formal schooling past high school. In 2020, direct care workers made an average of \$13.56/hour, or an annual income of \$20,200. ⁽¹⁾ This contributes to high turnover of RCAs in memory care facilities that results in a decline in the quality of care for people with dementia.
- Supporting advanced training for RCAs and other direct eldercare workers will help recognize the value of their labor and improve the care for people with dementia.

Suggest how the issue can be solved

- Advanced training and education for direct care workers
- Increased recognition of the value of direct care workers
 - Increased pay for direct care work
 - Ability to pursue a career in direct care work

Call to action

Support H.R. 2999- Direct CARE Opportunity Act

This bill **provides grants for advanced opportunities for direct care workers** and for the development of projects to **recruit and retain direct care workers**

Advocacy Pitch: Support For Direct Care Workers

1. The care offered by residential care assistants (RCAs) and other direct care workers is indispensable for the well-being of people in memory care. These workers are undervalued because their knowledge is not credential-based in the same way as many other healthcare workers. A high turnover rate of RCAs negatively impacts the care of people with dementia.
1. Direct care workers comprise the bulk of the largest field of healthcare (long-term care for older adults) and this field is quickly growing; 1.5 million jobs were added between 2010 and 2015. In 2020, direct care workers made an average of \$13.56/hour, or an annual income of \$20,200. 81% of RCAs are women and more than 50% of home health aides do not have formal schooling past high school (1).
1. Support H.R. 2999- Direct CARE Opportunity Act
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