The Home Care Workforce in New York: COVID-19 Impacts

Presented by:

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Statewide Hospital-Home Care Collaborative
For COVID and Beyond: Workforce Summit
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The Center for Health Workforce Studies (CHWS), established in 1996, is an academic research center based at the School of Public Health at the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY).

Mission: To provide timely, accurate information and conduct policy-relevant research about the health workforce.

Goal: To assist stakeholders to better understand health workforce issues in order to inform decision-making on health workforce development programs and policies.

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Today’s Presentation

- Trends in home health care employment
- Health workforce projections
- Health workforce shortages in New York
- Home care provider recruitment and retention issues - pre and post pandemic
- Strategies addressing shortages

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Job Growth in Home Care Is Outpacing Job Growth in All Other Health Settings in the US

Source: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections, Table 2.11, Employment and output by industry.
Jobs in Ambulatory Care (including Home Health Care) in NY Are Growing Faster Than Jobs in Other Health Settings

Source: New York State Department of Labor, Employment Projections, Long-Term Industry Employment Projections, 2018-2028
Projected Future Demand for Health Workers in the US 2019-2029

- Home health aides
- RNs
- Nursing assistants
- LPNs


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Workforce Shortages in NY

• New York has an abundant supply of health workers, but they are not well-distributed
• There are well-documented and chronic shortages of primary care, oral health and behavioral health providers
  o Areas of greatest need are designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas
• Provider incentive programs (eg, NHSC, Doctors Across NY, State Loan Repayment) have successfully supported health care professionals who work in these communities
Workforce Shortages in Home Care

• Home care agencies across the state have reported long-standing issues recruiting and retaining workers in a number of different professions and occupations.

• In 2017, home care agencies in the state reported the most difficulty:
  - Recruiting registered nurses, physical therapists and occupational therapists.
  - Retaining personal care aides, home health aides and registered nurses.

• The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened shortages in home care, particularly for direct care workers.
Home Health Care Agencies: Recruitment Issues

Most Difficult Occupations to RECRUIT:

- **Home Health Aides**: 81% of agencies indicated home health aides were difficult to recruit.
- **Personal Care Aides**: 78% of agencies indicated experienced personal care aides were difficult to recruit.

**Primary Reasons:**

- Workforce Shortages
- State Unemployment Benefits
- Fear of Exposure to COVID-19 and Possible Transmission to Others

Based on data collected from surveys conducted by CHWS between December 2020 and March 2021.
Home Health Care Agencies: Retention Issues

Most Difficult Occupations to RETAIN:

- **Personal Care Aides**: 73% of agencies indicated personal care aides were difficult to retain.
- **Home Health Aides**: 72% of agencies indicated home health aides were difficult to retain.
- **Homemakers**: 68% of agencies indicated homemakers were difficult to retain.

**Primary Reasons for Leaving:**

- **Finding Higher Pay Elsewhere**
- **Family Commitments**
- **Transportation Issues**

Based on data collected from surveys conducted by CHWS between December 2020 and March 2021.

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Home Care Recruitment Strategies

• Promote health career opportunities to diverse candidate pools
  o Students – college, high school, middle school, elementary school
  o Second career candidates

• Develop flexible job opportunities
  o Be responsive to the needs of prospective candidates

• Build viable career ladders

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Home Care Retention Issues

Learn more about the issues and challenges existing workers face

- Transportation
- Childcare
- Eldercare
- Workplace culture
- Work hours
- Career advancement
- Resilience
- More attractive job opportunities elsewhere
Investments to Support Workforce Development: What Should We Do?

- Pipeline strategies
  - Faculty development and retention, clinical placements

- Sustainable career ladder programs
  - Partnerships between educators and providers

- Transition to practice:
  - Mentoring, residencies

- Retention strategies

- Better data and evidence
Questions?

• For more information, please email me at: jmoore@albany.edu
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