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10/08/2008

Increase all LTC rates to assure living wages for workers.

Long term care is heavily influenced by Medicaid reimbursement. Most provider expenditures are for personnel. Without adequate provider rates, workers inevitably suffer. Rates must be sufficiently adjusted to allow payment of a living wage and benefits to direct care workers.

Requirements for Family Care and SSI Managed Care Organizations to demonstrate that their provider contracts and rates are sufficient to assure a living wage to direct care workers.

Medicaid and long term care reform should not be achieved by shifting the burden of the cost of care to lower paid workers. Managed care rates must be sufficient and standards in place to enable providers to increase, not decrease, wages and fringe benefits. Any increase to Family Care rates should be reflected in increases in provider contracts.

Reform and fund training and testing requirements to allow workers more portability across long term care settings.

Moving toward more portable credentials and opportunities for specialized training and advancement would go far in reducing the frustration of good workers who often see the only opportunity for moving up, as moving out of the profession of direct care worker. DHS and DWD should work on reforming current licensing rules that hinder movement of workers across settings, thus improving their advancement opportunities. DHS should also support and provide funding for training that will enhance career advancement and competencies among workers across the continuum of long term care, such as the Personal Care Competency Training and the College of Direct Support.

Encourage and support local long-term care workforce coalitions.

The most successful local LTC workforce coalitions are those that have at least part-time staff. They bridge boundaries among stakeholders, allowing for information and resource sharing and testing of best practices. In Wisconsin, the most effective changes are those which originate or receive support at the grass roots level. In several counties we have demonstrated that coalitions of stakeholders create the climate for change and the infrastructure for activities to improve recruitment and retention of workers. We would like DHS and DWD to support and encourage MCOs and ADRCs to take an active role in existing coalitions and to create them where needed.

Workforce impact of regulatory changes.

Many regulatory changes in community-based and residential long term care have had an impact on providers' ability to recruit, compensate, or retain direct care workers. Any future proposed regulatory changes in long term care should be accompanied by an analysis of the impact the change will have on the workforce.

Create a Committee or Commission for Coordination and Oversight

Many efforts to recruit, train, and educate the workforce for long term care are being put forward thru individual agencies, state and local workforce alliances, Technical/Vocational Colleges, DWD, DHS, and other Councils. Many of these are duplicative. Promote a way to gather information on what is being done by these groups and funnel them into a central area so silos of duplication can be eliminated; furthermore, make it possible to share what is happening, e.g. between tech colleges, between local workforce alliances, etc.

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