



Wellpoint Initiatives to Address Direct Care Workforce Challenges in Iowa

Introduction

This report provides a consolidated and formal overview of Wellpoint's historical and ongoing efforts to address Direct Care Workforce (DCW) challenges in Iowa. Duplicate items have been removed, and the content has been organized into clear thematic sections.

Historical Investments and Supports (2018–2021)

Support for Training and Conferences

- **Iowa CareGivers Association (2018–2020):** Sponsored conferences focused on peer support and professional development for direct care workers.
- **Iowa Association of Community Providers (2018–2024):** Supported conferences that included DCW recruitment and training for home and community-based service (HCBS) providers.

Use of Federal COVID-19 Funds

- Allocated federal COVID-19 funding (2020–2021) to support DCW recruitment, training, and retention across the state.

Elevance Health Foundation Support

- Facilitated Foundation funding to the Iowa Health Care Association Foundation to strengthen DCW training and retention programs, particularly in rural nursing facilities and skilled nursing facilities disproportionately impacted during COVID-19.
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Training and Capacity-Building Initiatives

Dr. Tom Pomeranz Training Programs

Wellpoint funded multiple training and coaching activities conducted by Dr. Pomeranz:

- **2021:**
 - Six two-day in-person training sessions for 127 individuals from 46 organizations.
 - On-site coaching provided to seven organizations.

- **2023:**
 - Thirteen virtual training sessions across eight organizations.
 - Three one-day in-person training sessions attended by 172 participants.
 - Sponsored training delivered at the Money Follows the Person conference (August 23, 2023).

Skills System Training (2021–Present)

- 34 organizations have utilized the Skills System Training.
- 1,970 e-learning memberships issued.
- 270 individuals completed the virtual two-day Instructor Training.
- 316 consultation calls conducted with providers.

Current Workforce Development Efforts

Staffing Investments

- **Workforce Development Manager:** A dedicated position added to support HCBS providers with capacity-building and workforce strategies.
- **HCBS Provider Training Specialist:** Provides education, resources, and technical assistance to promote effective, high-quality service delivery.

Resources Available to HCBS Providers

Elsevier Training Platform

Wellpoint/Elevance Health partners with Elsevier to provide a comprehensive training curriculum for providers. The platform includes the College of Direct Supports and supports DCWs serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

CareBridge Medical Group – 24/7 Member Support

- Provides enhanced telehealth services via in-home tablets.
- Supports members and providers with education and intervention to reduce emergency room visits and provider burnout.

Skills System E-Learning



- A 2.5-hour Skills Basics e-learning course covering nine core Skills System competencies.
- Includes videos, practice exercises, and downloadable visual aids.
- Suitable for agencies of all sizes.

Frontline Management Training (Dr. Pomeranz)

- Focuses on developing strong supervisory skills to improve DCW performance and retention.
- Integrates Skills System concepts into supervisory leadership development.

ANCOR DSP Toolkit

- Elevance Health/Wellpoint is authorized to use DCW recruitment and retention resources, including job previews, PSAs, recruiting materials, interview guides, and turnover calculators.

Additional Community Workforce Initiatives

Community Health Worker (CHW) Alliance

Wellpoint participates in the Iowa CHW Alliance led by DHHS and Iowa HealthTeamWorks. Contributions include:

- Funding three CHW training cohorts at DMACC (2021–2022).
- Development of continuing education modules aligned with Wellpoint’s Health Impact priority domains.

Job Connection Program

- Supports recruitment, training, and placement of Wellpoint members interested in DCW roles.
- Represents a promising model for scaling workforce entry pathways.

Conclusion

Over the past several years, Wellpoint has demonstrated a sustained and expanding commitment to strengthening Iowa’s Direct Care Workforce. Through financial investments, extensive training initiatives, provider supports, and innovative workforce



development strategies, Wellpoint continues to work collaboratively with statewide partners to address ongoing workforce challenges and improve care quality across Iowa.