



State Efforts to Integrate Family Caregivers and Direct Care Workers



The
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Foundation



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Introduction

The growing demand for long-term services and supports (LTSS) is drawing increased attention to the critical role of both family caregivers and direct care workers (DCWs) in supporting older adults and individuals with disabilities. With an aging population, the gap between the care needed and the workforce available to provide it continues to widen. Family caregivers—often unpaid individuals providing essential daily support—and direct care workers—trained professionals employed to deliver care—are essential components of the care ecosystem. However, these groups have historically operated in parallel rather than as integrated components of a unified system. Recognizing this, states are now pursuing policies to bridge these roles, ensuring that direct care workers and family caregivers have opportunities to be connected to one another and are supported, trained, and integrated into the care system. This effort reflects a multifaceted approach to addressing workforce shortages, improving care quality, and ensuring sustainability within the caregiving system.

In response to the need for research and development of policies that connect formal and informal caregivers to support individuals, families, and workers within the LTSS system, The John A. Hartford Foundation provided funding to ADvancing States to launch the State Learning Collaborative on Integrating Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregiving Policies – named [the Cross-State Caregiving Collaborative \(CSCC\)](#). The CSCC builds on the work of the Administration for Community Living (ACL) [Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center](#) and the [2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#), and complements recent research on the intersection of paid and unpaid caregiving compiled by PHI and the National Alliance for Caregiving through The John A. Hartford-funded [Together in Care](#) initiative. The CSCC brought together nine states and three national partner organizations over a six-month period in 2024 to explore, develop, and draft plans to implement promising practices and programs that integrate these two vital caregiver populations.

Background

The majority of Americans with LTSS needs wish to remain in their homes and access services either at home or nearby in their communities, rather than in nursing homes or other forms of institutional care; this desire increases as we age.¹ To accommodate our desire to live and age with dignity where we choose, the LTSS system relies heavily on the support of unpaid family caregivers and paid direct care workers. **Family caregivers** (also known as informal caregivers) are defined by ACL as “all who are caring for individuals across the lifespan with chronic or other health conditions, disabilities, or functional limitations,” and is broadly interpreted to include “spouses, partners, children, siblings, friends, neighbors, kin, cousins, nieces and nephews, grandparents, parents, godparents, and others.”² States may employ more narrow definitions.³ Approximately 53 million Americans currently provide caregiving for another person.⁴ **Direct Care Workers** (DCWs) are a broad category of care providers defined by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to include licensed or certified nursing assistants (CNAs), Direct Support Professionals (DSPs – those working primarily with individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities), personal care attendants, and home health aides, among others.⁵ There are approximately 4.8 million DCWs providing care to an estimated 10 million Americans at home and in the community, as well as in residential or nursing facilities.⁶

Workforce Shortages in LTSS and the Evolving Role of Family Caregivers

Nationwide, the direct care workforce is experiencing severe shortages, exacerbated by high turnover rates, low wages, and limited opportunities for professional growth. As demand for services outpaces the supply of qualified workers, family caregivers are increasingly stepping in to fill gaps. However, without proper training, support, and recognition, family caregivers may face significant challenges in providing quality care, risking burnout and adverse outcomes for care recipients. Integrating family caregivers into the workforce provides a dual benefit: it offers a new source of qualified workers and formalizes the role of caregivers who are already performing critical tasks.

Family caregivers often manage complex care tasks traditionally associated with professional roles, including medication administration, wound care, and navigating healthcare systems. Formalizing their contributions through training and other supports can validate their efforts,

help provide financial stability and improve outcomes for the people they care for.⁷ This approach not only enhances the quality of care but also acknowledges the economic and emotional value of caregiving.

Improving Care Coordination

Family caregivers and direct care workers provide the vast majority of the hands-on long-term care to older Americans and people living with disabilities and are usually the closest observers of care recipients' physical, mental, and emotional status. There is evidence that policies and programs that support family caregivers have the effect of easing the burden on the direct care workforce and vice versa, and that support of caregivers whether paid or unpaid is associated with improved health outcomes for care recipients.⁸ While vital to the health and wellbeing of vulnerable individuals, these populations are rarely formally connected to one another in meaningful ways.⁹

A fragmented caregiving approach can lead to inconsistent care and poor outcomes. Integrating family caregivers with direct care workers into care teams can improve coordination by ensuring both groups operate as part of a cohesive care team, benefiting care recipients through more consistent and person-centered support, reducing stress and burnout, and decreasing lapses in care.¹⁰

Identified policies that can connect and integrate these two groups have the potential to alleviate pressure on the workforce, prevent burnout and improve the experiences of family caregivers, and enhance care coordination and health outcomes for all.¹¹ Additionally, as Medicaid is the primary payer for LTSS that help older adults and people with disabilities live their lives independently, supporting family caregivers and direct care workers will be an increasingly crucial component of states' efforts to control Medicaid costs while still providing quality care to their residents.¹²

Together in Care

Recognizing the need to identify and amplify opportunities to connect family caregivers and direct care workers, PHI and the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC), with the support of The John A. Hartford Foundation, conducted a literature review and interviews with subject matter experts in the field to produce the [*Together in Care*](#) issue brief, published in June 2024. *Together in Care* highlights areas of opportunity and identifies recommendations in four policy areas to strengthen the partnership between paid and unpaid caregivers: promoting care team integration, expanding access to self-direction, strengthening matching service registries, and investing in research and evaluation. ADvancing States and the CSCC are especially grateful for

the work done by the *Together in Care* initiative, which was used as framework for developing CSCC curriculum. Multiple CSCC states have reported using *Together in Care* as a policymaking resource when working with agency leadership, governors' offices, state legislators, and other state agencies.

Goals of the Cross-State Caregiving Collaborative

Building on the momentum of the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, the Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center, and the *Together in Care* initiative, The John A. Hartford Foundation generously supported ADvancing States in launching a project to put policy into practice. The CSCC had two goals: (1) establish a learning collaborative composed of states and national partners to improve policies and practices for supporting family caregivers and direct care workers, and (2) develop tailored action plans for participating states to initiate policy changes. Fourteen states applied to be a part of the collaborative. While originally planned for five, the CSCC expanded to nine states—Arizona, California, Idaho, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Utah—bringing a diversity of state caregiving policy landscapes. States promoted a cross-agency perspective by including multiple state partners in their work, such as Aging, Disability, Medicaid, and Developmental Disabilities agencies. The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC), and PHI contributed expertise in planning, facilitation, and resource sharing.

State applications and a poll of participant interests informed the curriculum for the collaborative meetings. The June meeting of the CSCC coincided with the release of the *Together in Care* brief; findings from the initiative were presented by PHI and NAC, followed by breakout discussions on care team integration, matching service registries, self-direction, and research & data. Based on ongoing participant feedback, content for the remainder of the project period focused on **care team integration and caregiver training, matching service registries**, and leveraging **multisector plans for aging**. Areas of interest among states that were not fully explored due to time constraints include self-directed models, case management training, and enabling technology opportunities. In addition to monthly CSCC meetings where states shared their areas of interest, strengths, and challenges and met with additional subject matter experts, all nine CSCC project leads were brought to Baltimore in August 2024 for the National HCBS Conference and were provided with a Caregiving and Workforce Policy Track, which included more than 30 caregiving-themed sessions and workshops. After the conference, states continued to meet as a collaborative and were also provided with one-on-one technical assistance with ADvancing States and partner subject matter experts, who assisted in the development of tailored action plans for each state. Summaries of areas of exploration and state policy action plans are provided in the following sections.

Areas of Exploration

Care Team Integration and Training

Care team integration involves incorporating family members and direct care workers into an individual’s interdisciplinary care team that includes doctors, nurses, rehabilitative therapists, social workers, pharmacists, care managers, and others. Family caregivers and direct care workers can provide intimate knowledge of the consumer’s preferences, routines, history, and current health status, and involving them in the care team allows for better care planning and assessment, enhanced coordination, better monitoring and reporting of changes in an individual’s health status, and improved quality, outcomes, and efficiency of care, as well as increased health care cost savings.¹³ The CSCC explored two primary areas of opportunity:

- Providing training for healthcare providers, workers, and family members
- Leveraging Managed Care Organization (MCO) resources

In addition to PHI and NAC, states met with subject matter experts in caregiver training and health care team inclusion. Participants from CSCC member Arizona, a leader in this area, shared their experience with promoting integration in ALTCS (Arizona Long Term Care Services). ALTCS care teams include direct care providers and, according to the state, as many as two-thirds of the direct care workers serving individuals in AHCCCS, the state’s Medicaid program, are trained and paid family caregivers. Arizona was the first state to implement Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS), in which MCOs deliver LTSS. The state is a model of supporting individuals in the setting they desire – approximately 91% of Arizona’s LTSS population receives services at home and in the community rather than in a nursing home or other institutional setting. Coupled with new caregiver supports offered through the state’s 1115 waiver, the state can offer integrated physical, behavioral, and long-term care services under managed care organizations (MCOs), and collaborates with the State Unit on Aging (SUA) to strengthen workforce systems. Arizona is currently planning to re-energize its No Wrong Door system for caregiver navigation to include a “whole family” approach to care planning.

Along with Arizona, five of the other eight CSCC states have instituted MLTSS programs. MCOs can promote the integration of family members and direct care workers into care teams

through the inclusion of caregivers in care planning, requiring and incentivizing training and education for all care team members, and facilitating certain caregiver and workforce supports. MCOs running MLTSS programs are incentivized to improve member health outcomes, and MCO contracts may be leveraged by states to connect family members and direct care workers. CSCC participants met with Sharon Alexander, who shared AmeriHealth Caritas' initiatives to integrate DCWs and family caregivers into care teams in Pennsylvania's Community Health Choices Program. AmeriHealth supports DCWs and caregivers through training programs, value-based incentives, and technology platforms like the Circle of Care app, promoting communication and care coordination. Informal caregivers are identified and evaluated through an assessment process and then integrated into interdisciplinary care teams. AmeriHealth Caritas is piloting a program collecting DCW insight into patient conditions via electronic reports with the goal of reducing emergency room use and inpatient care and increasing community living.

Corinne Eldridge, who directs the [Center for Caregiver Advancement in California](#), shared her insights with the CSCC on the benefits of caregiver training. California's statewide In-Home Supportive Services program (IHSS) training demonstrated measurable benefits, including reduced emergency room visits, improved caregiver confidence, and stronger communication between caregivers, consumers, and clinicians. The training courses, currently limited to DCWs, emphasize role-playing, communication strategies, and understanding care team dynamics to overcome barriers like language and systemic biases.

Training for healthcare professionals developed by [Caregivers As Partners in Care Teams \(CAP-CT\)](#) was also shared with CSCC members. CAP-CT is an ACL-funded project intended to advance the National Caregiving Strategy goal of providing health care teams with the skills and confidence to include family caregivers in an individual's care journey.

Several CSCC states are now planning to develop, adopt, or expand training programs. While CSCC members were overwhelmingly supportive of caregiver integration into interdisciplinary care teams, members also recommended that policymakers develop best practices to preserve person-centered care and maintain the voice of the individual in care planning.

Matching Service Registries

Matching service registries are online platforms where direct care workers can showcase their experience, credentials, and the care services they offer, while consumers can create profiles detailing their care needs. These portals allow workers, consumers, and sometimes family members to connect directly. A well-developed matching service registry has the potential to effectively align workforce expertise with care recipient requirements. Additionally, by fostering

better matches between workers and care recipients, these registries can enhance care continuity, a factor highly valued by family caregivers and linked to improved outcomes for care recipients.¹⁴ Despite their benefits in connecting workers and individuals need LTSS and supporting family caregivers, public investment in matching service registries has been limited. The CSCC brought in two states running registries – North Dakota and Wisconsin – to share their experience.

North Dakota’s legislatively mandated quality service provider (QSP) registry [Direct Care Careers](#)¹, administered by the Department of Health and Human Services links provider agencies with workers who meet state competency requirements and vice versa and also connects workers to training resources. [Direct Care Careers](#) is a free, national website that may be used both as a platform to house learning management systems (LMS) for caregivers and as a job registry and is currently active in two other states – Colorado and Texas.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services, in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Green Bay and the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, has created a free statewide program – [Wiscaregiver Careers](#) – that serves as a training and credentialing platform and matching service registry for direct care workers, certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and family caregivers. Wiscaregiver Careers has the potential to be a model for state, multi-state, and even a national registry, training, and credentialing program.

Further evaluation of existing registries is needed. Implementing and sustaining a matching registry often requires considerable investment and coordination across agencies, including Medicaid, Aging, and Disability departments; several CSCC members expressed hesitation at pursuing this option due to these challenges. Additionally, training and credentialing requirements vary widely by state – this can be particularly challenging for border or multistate regions. An easily accessible platform that can be used for training, credentialing, and job matching for both family caregivers and direct care workers has the potential to improve worker and family caregiver competency, improve health outcomes for care recipients, and alleviate the workforce shortage.

Multisector Plans for Aging

A state multisector plan for aging (MPA) is a comprehensive framework that brings together stakeholders from various sectors—such as healthcare, social services, housing, transportation, and workforce development—to address the needs of an aging population. MPAs (also known as master or strategic plans for aging) aim to create inclusive, age-friendly communities by

¹ Direct Care Careers is hosted through a partnership of ADvancing States and Altarum.

aligning resources, policies, and services across sectors to improve quality of life for older adults and their caregivers. States fund MPAs using a combination of federal, state, and local resources, as well as private funding and partnerships. MPAs are public documents that garner the attention of a widespread audience, including policy makers, elected officials, stakeholders, community leaders, providers, individuals, and others. Most CSCC states' MPAs are authorized legislatively, with Oklahoma currently being an exception, though its MPA has been developed and is being implemented with state legislative involvement.

All MPAs currently being implemented seek to address family caregiver and direct care worker supports. Five of the nine CSCC states (CA, MD, OK, PA, TX) are actively implementing or developing an MPA. Four of these states are pursuing policies related to the integration of paid and unpaid caregivers through implementation of their MPA – summaries of those efforts are provided in the following pages.

Conclusion

Creating meaningful ways to connect direct care workers and family caregivers for the support of individuals with LTSS needs makes intuitive sense. Recognizing the complementary roles of family caregivers and DCWs, states are working to develop and implement policies that promote the integration of both groups. Activating further research in this area should be pursued. The CSCC was limited to a seven-month project period; to implement their action plans, states will contend with common barriers such as staff capacity and other funding limitations. Another important caveat to the action plans is that evaluation protocols vary from state to state. As the project was certainly not exhaustive, other identified areas of opportunity to connect caregiver types not explored extensively by the CSCC include case manager training, self-direction, enabling technology, and caregiver awareness campaigns. We recommend further collaboration among states and other stakeholders to examine these and other possible areas of intersection.

State Initiatives

Summaries of certain state initiatives are described in the following section.



Arizona

Goal: Explore a Whole Family Approach to No Wrong Door (NWD) and Service Planning

Summary: Arizona brought its Medicaid and Aging agencies together for this project. Arizona stands out among states in HCBS – 91% of its LTSS population receives services at home and in the community and the state estimates that the overwhelming majority of direct care workers are paid family caregivers. Because of the high percentage of paid family caregivers, the state’s original focus with the project’s support was to address the intersection of DCW and family caregiving through respite. After consideration, Arizona’s proposed strategy supported by this project will center on exploring enhancements to its No Wrong Door System and Medicaid’s long term care person centered planning process that would better integrate the needs of families, caregivers and individuals receiving services. This approach aims to holistically address the needs of both care recipients and caregivers by integrating supportive services and existing resources and enhancing program planning and coordination across state agencies and services providers.

- Gather resources on Whole Family and PCOC
- Identify any Medicaid Administrative Claiming dollars to support NWD enhancements
- Environmental scan of No Wrong Door (NWD) Consumer Access System
- Identify lower cost interventions
 - Information and Referral/Assistance
 - Intake and Screen
 - Options Counseling

- Assessment tools
- Person-centered planning
- Explore training models
- Develop plans for future engagement and cross training of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and other NWD partners

Opportunities New 1115 caregiver supports, 211, Closed Loop Referral, joint agency program planning, ADvancing States No Wrong Door Work Group participation

Challenges: Competing state policy priorities



California

Goal: Ensure all new initiatives for the direct care workforce under the state’s Master Plan for Aging will integrate family caregiving (1 year)

Summary: Addressing the needs of the workforce, including the paid Direct Care Workforce and unpaid family caregivers is central to California’s Master Plan for Aging (MPA), Goal 4, Caregiving that Works. Recognizing family caregivers as a vital subset of the direct care workforce with programs such as In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) has enabled family caregivers to receive income for providing care. In addition, the California Department of Aging (CDA) CalGrows initiative (Growing a Resilient, Outstanding Workforce in the Home and Community) a Direct Care Workforce Training and Stipends Program provided incentives, support, and career pathways for the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) workforce, contributing to high-quality care statewide. While the program sunsetted on September 30, 2024, the trainings are being made publicly available on the CDA website.

Key Actions:

- Presented information to the [Impact Stakeholder Committees](#), [Equity Advisor Committee on Aging and Disability](#), [CA Aging & Disability Research Partnership](#), [Disability & Aging Community Living Advisory Committee](#), [CA Elder & Disability Justice Coordinating Council](#), [Alzheimer’s Disease & Related Conditions Advisory Committee](#), and Workforce Committee (completed).
 - Incorporating committee recommendations into MPA, Goal 4 (in progress):
 - Initiative 68: Advance the implementation of the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers by launching California’s Caregiver Equity Roadmap, which seeks to expand access to culturally responsive caregiver services for underserved and underrepresented populations and communities.
 - Initiative 69: Launch Cal CARES (California Caregiver Awareness, Resources, Education & Support), with a focus on underserved and underrepresented populations and communities to improve: 1. The awareness of and outreach

to caregivers. 2. The navigation of caregiver resources. 3. The access to caregiver education and training opportunities.

- Initiative 70: Develop and launch a curated catalog of free trainings in threshold languages for public use by family caregivers and direct care workers to meet the education and training needs of California’s diverse caregivers.
- Initiative 71: Explore the development of core competencies that build caregiver skills and knowledge to support the retention and career mobility of California’s direct care workers.
- Initiative 72: Explore innovative approaches for Community Health Workers (CHW) to support older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.
- Initiative 73: Develop programs and approaches, in alignment with the Master Plan for Career Education, that provide direct care workers with educational and training pathways that will allow them to advance into stable, well-paying careers.
- The following 2023-24 initiatives were utilized to inform the 2025-26 updates with committee input (closed out):
 - Initiative 83: Promote innovative models for Community Health Workers serving older adults and people with disabilities.
 - Initiative 84: Develop a competency-based, evidence-informed training inventory for family caregiving.
 - Note: CalGrows ended in September 2024 but training content remains accessible through the CalGrows website. CalGrows was a Direct Care Workforce Training and Stipends Program administered by the California Department of Aging (CDA) that provided incentives, support, and career pathways for the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) workforce, contributing to high-quality care statewide.
 - 33,429 unique learners
 - Over \$35.9 million paid out in stipends and incentives to direct care workers
 - 700 trainings offered in 10 languages
 - Initiative 85: Diversify the direct care worker pipeline through emerging models, as funding allows.
 - Note: The California Department of Aging (CDA) worked with CalHHS departments and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency through the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) Peer Learning Collaborative. Through this process, we have explored other states' best practices for the direct care workforce, including how we

might approach development of core competencies as a longer-term goal.

- Collaborating with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency on the development of draft core competencies for direct care workers (in progress).
- Identifying opportunities for family caregiving training as part of direct care workforce (DCW) training (in progress).
- Partnering with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to align caregiver workforce goals and integrate family caregivers (in progress).
- Exploring the integration of family caregiving into Community Health Worker training and the DCW career pipeline (in progress).

Potential Challenges:

- California continues to confront a shortage of direct care workers in all settings.
- Continued need for training and support of California's paid direct care workers and family caregivers.

Opportunities:

- In 2024, California awarded the ACL grant "Advancing State Implementation of the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers", with a \$490,000 to support implementation of National Strategy to Support Family Caregiver goals.
- The CDA continues to partner with state and national partners to maintain and develop training resources for caregivers such as what is available for free at <https://aging.ca.gov/Providers and Partners/Cal Grows/Courses/>.



Maryland

Goal: Leverage “Longevity Ready Maryland” to connect Direct Care Workers and Family Caregivers through Training (2 years)

Summary: Maryland is advancing its multisector plan for aging, **Longevity Ready Maryland**, by connecting direct care workers and family caregivers through integrated training efforts over a two-year period. Maryland will be continuing their work on this plan through NASHP’s State Caregiving Learning Collaborative. Maryland is also a recipient of ACL’s “Advancing State Implementation of the National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers” grant and plans to use this funding to help in the implementation of its CSCC plan through Longevity Ready Maryland.

Key Actions:

- Recommending integration issues to three economic subgroups (Family Caregiving, Direct Care Workforce, Workforce 50+) (completed).
- Presenting findings and reports to the subgroups (completed).
- Crosscutting policy recommendations across subgroups (completed).
- Hiring a National Family Caregiver Support Program Coordinator (completed).
- Identifying training opportunities for family caregivers and DCWs (in progress).
- Further developing and implementing plan through the State Caregiving Collaborative (2025-2026).
- Working with Medicaid to incorporate family caregiver training for DCWs (2026).

Potential Challenges:

- Cross-agency coordination; funding sustainability

Opportunities:

- Recipient of ACL caregiving grant
- National Family Caregiver Support Program Coordinator position filled
- Selected to participate in NASHP-led State Caregiving Learning Collaborative 2025-2027



North Carolina

Goal: Establish a family caregiver training module for family members to gain the capacities needed to become direct care workers and receive a certificate

Summary: North Carolina's initiative to certify family caregivers as direct care workers demonstrates a practical approach to addressing workforce shortages. By offering training modules and certification, the state will provide family caregivers with opportunities for professional recognition and career advancement. The inclusion of family caregivers in workforce planning ensures that policies reflect their lived experiences and challenges. Through its Medicaid agency, North Carolina has drafted the following plan of action. Timelines have been placed on hold while the state concentrates its efforts on hurricane relief and recovery.

Key Actions:

- Identify and seek approval for training module to be piloted (on hold)
- Require the family caregiver to complete the training module upon enrollment in the program and pass the determined competencies validation to be awarded a certificate
- When qualifying conditions are met, collaborate with provider agencies to hire these trained family caregivers as direct workers or backup workers. The qualifying conditions are:
 - inability to recruit a direct care worker after X number of attempts
 - The worker must be out of work due to illness, family emergency, or other unexpected circumstances.
 - When it is determined a family caregiver is the best-suited personnel to provide care.
- Include family caregivers and direct care workers in planning and discussion meetings to gain insight and feedback.
- Identifying supportive services that decrease burnout and stress.
- Identifying funds or community resources to implement and offer identified supportive services to family caregivers.

Potential Challenges:

- Current policies that may prevent family caregivers from being direct care workers
- Establishing the limits of eligibility to become a family caregiver
- Designating hours of service per week for family caregivers that are reasonable and reduce additional burden and stress
- Services to support the family caregiver that can be incorporated into the participant's program
- Protection and oversight of program participants
- Lack of collaboration between direct care workers and family caregivers
- Provider agencies' assumption that their staffing recruitment efforts are limited due to family caregivers
- Provider agencies' assumption of reduction in revenue because of consumer direction opportunity
- Training needs for family caregivers and direct care workers
- The potential of devaluing the direct worker and family caregiver's feedback during care planning meetings

Opportunities:

- A larger pool of available workers, regardless of direct worker or family caregiver
- Limited gaps in service provision
- Skill building for family caregivers
- Training caregiver module for direct workers and family caregivers
- Independent provider module for family caregivers



Oklahoma

Goal: Create a toolkit for healthcare and direct care professionals that includes resources and information about the important role of caregivers. (2 years)

Summary: Oklahoma identified the development and implementation of a policy within the state’s multisector plan for aging – Aging Our Way – Pathway 11.2 as an area of opportunity to pursue with the TA provided through the CSCC. Oklahoma’s barriers include lack of appropriations and staff capacity. Oklahoma will be joining NASHP’s State Caregiving Learning Collaborative and plans to further develop this and other caregiver initiatives during the coming project period.

Key Actions:

- Identify resources, including recently released CAP-CT training, “Foundational Skills for Engaging Caregivers in Health Care”, Family Caregiver-DCW one-pager, Oklahoma state caregiving profile (in progress)
- Bring resources to MPA work groups (pending – winter 2025)
- Leverage network to advocate for funding for MPA Pathway 11.2. (spring 2025)
- Pilot healthcare and direct care professional training (fall 2026)
- Implement training for healthcare and direct care professionals on the important role of family caregivers (spring 2027)

Potential Challenges:

- No legislative appropriations for MPA project
- Limited staff capacity

Opportunities:

- Selected to participate in NASHP-led State Caregiving Learning Collaborative 2025-2027
- Selected to participate in Center for Healthcare Strategies (CHCS) Multisector Plan for Aging Learning Collaborative 2025 -2026



Pennsylvania

Goals:

Launch a Statewide Caregiver Toolkit that Supports Care Team Integration and Provides Training Accessible to Both Family and Paid Caregivers (1-2 years)

Revise 2019 Blueprint for the Direct Care Workforce to Enhance Care Team Integration for both Direct Care Workers and Family Caregivers (1-2 years)

Summary: Pennsylvania’s Caregiver Toolkit initiative and the revision of its 2019 Blueprint for Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce, both initiatives driven under Pennsylvania’s multisector plan for aging – Aging Our Way PA -- demonstrate a comprehensive approach to supporting family caregivers and the workforce.

Caregiver Toolkit (1-2 years)

Key Actions:

- Launch development survey for caregivers (in progress)
- Identify areas where “Caregiver Toolkit” can incorporate resources and information from Together in Care and CSCC (completed)
- Present mock-up of Toolkit to national caregiving experts – ADvancing States, NAC, NASHP, PHI, and The John A. Hartford Foundation (completed)
- Identify areas of intersection in professional and unpaid caregiver interventions
- Identify organization tools to support care teams with the management and coordination of caregiving
- Launch Caregiver Toolkit with training and resources for family caregivers and care teams (2026)

Revise Blueprint for Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce (1-2 years)

Key Actions:

- Review deferred Blueprint from 2019 and update for 2025-2026
- Present Blueprint to ADvancing States, NAC, NASHP, PHI, and The John A. Hartford Foundation (completed)
- Receive feedback from ADvancing States and PHI; present to State Long-Term Care Council (completed)

- Continue to solicit feedback and revise (in progress)
- Launch Blueprint for 2025-2026

Opportunities:

- Momentum behind implementation of MPA
- Support of Governor's Office
- MPA funding sustainability



Utah

Goal: Streamline Paid and Unpaid Caregiver Efforts through New State Caregiving Roundtable

Summary: The recently launched Caregiving Roundtable is bringing together a wide range of interested, including government, university, and private sector partners and seeks to address family caregiving while also addressing the DCW shortage. Members of the roundtable include the Department of Aging, Medicaid Integrated Health Care, Services for People with Disabilities, the National Family Caregiver Support Program, the Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, Office of Refugee Services, the Division of Multicultural Affairs, the Division of Indian Affairs, the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs, and representatives from some or all of the state's tribes. Additionally, the roundtable includes the Commission on Aging, the University of Utah, Utah State University, Home Care and Hospice Association, AARP, the Alzheimer's Association, the American Cancer Society, and Area Agencies on Aging. The state will be continuing the development of caregiver connection work through the NASHP-led State Caregiving Learning Collaborative.

Key Actions:

- Statewide assessment to avoid duplication of effort
- Examine No Wrong Door approach
- Identify Roundtable governance structure
- Develop statewide training on No Wrong Door for family caregivers
- Implement No Wrong Door training statewide
- Secure funding for the creation of a one-stop shop platform for family caregivers that includes specific DCW component

Opportunities:

- Utah Caregiving Roundtable
- Public-private partnerships
- Selected to participate in NASHP-led State Caregiving Learning Collaborative 2025-2027

Resources

[Together in Care](#)

[CAP-CT](#)

[Center for Caregiver Advancement](#)

[Direct Care Careers](#)

[Wiscaregiver Careers](#)

[The National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers](#)

[Direct Care Workforce Strategies Center](#)

Footnotes

¹ Binette, J. (2021, November 18). 2021 Home and Community Preference Survey: A National Survey of Adults Age 18-Plus. <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00479.001>

² 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers.

https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/RAISE_SGRG/NatlStrategyToSupportFamilyCaregivers.pdf

³ Lowers, J., & Herr, S. (2024). *Advancing equity for older adults without family caregivers: Trends in Medicaid waivers*. Advancing States.

⁴ Reinhard, Susan C., Selena Caldera, Ari Houser, and Rita B. Choula. *Valuing the Invaluable 2023 Update: Strengthening Supports for Family Caregivers*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute. March 8, 2023

⁵ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/long-term-services-supports/direct-care-workforce/dsw-core-competency-project/index.html>

⁶ PHI, Direct Care Workers in the United States: Key Facts 2023

⁷ Reinhard, Susan C., Selena Caldera, Ari Houser, and Rita B. Choula. *Valuing the Invaluable 2023 Update: Strengthening Supports for Family Caregivers*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute. March 8, 2023

^{8 8} <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/economic-impacts-programs-support-caregivers-final-report-0#conclude>

⁹ Together in Care Issue Brief

¹⁰ Together in Care Issue Brief

¹¹ Together in Care Issue Brief

¹² <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/how-do-medicaid-home-care-programs-support-family-caregivers/>

¹³ Reinhard, S. C., Given, B., Petlick, N. H., & Hughes, R. G. (2008). Supporting family caregivers in providing care. In R. G. Hughes (Ed.), *Patient safety and quality: An evidence-based handbook for nurses* (Chapter 14). Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US).

¹⁴ Together in Care Issue Brief



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