Age-Friendly Insights: Direct Care Workers

The John A. Hartford Foundation (JAHF) asked people in America about their perceptions about direct care workers. The main finding is clear.

An overwhelming majority of people believe direct care workers need support now.

Direct care workers provide hands-on care with daily tasks like bathing and dressing in peoples’ homes and in long-term care facilities, including nursing homes.

People underestimate the care they’ll need as they age.

Nearly 50% of people don’t think they will need support from a direct care worker as they age; in reality 66% will need it.

Most people in America support higher pay and more training for direct care workers.

- The median wage for direct care workers is $13/hr
- 72% of people overestimate the median wage for direct care workers
- 73% of people think direct care workers are underpaid
- 60% of people think direct care workers would benefit from more training
People expect the government to help direct care workers protect older adults.

94% of people say oversight of nursing homes and home care agencies is important.

JAHF is investing in the direct care workforce. Learn more:

- **Advocating for the Direct Care Workforce**
  PHI advocates for high-quality training, a living wage and greater awareness of the important role direct care workers play.

- **Advancing Training and Leadership Skills**
  The Teaching Nursing Home model pairs academic nursing schools with long-term care facilities to improve training and education for staff, including direct care workers, providing them opportunities to foster and grow their careers and leadership skills.

- **Redesigning Nursing Home Care**
  The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Committee on the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes’ is preparing recommendations for improving the quality of care in today’s nursing homes, partly by investing in a highly-skilled direct care workforce.

The poll is part of Age-Friendly Insights, a series measuring opinions on issues related to improving the care of older adults. Learn more.