

# 2023 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

## Supporting Personal Well-Being of Oregon's Direct Care Workforce in Assisted Living and Residential Care

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Thank you to our partners:



# Presentation Objectives

Attendees will be able to...

1. document promising organizational and policy strategies to enhance the direct care workforce, especially those employed in assisted living and residential care (AL/RC).
2. describe strategies that support mental and emotional well-being at work from the perspective of direct care workers in AL/RC.
3. identify actionable areas of improvement to implement within organizations to support care workers.

*We have no disclosures to report.*

# Presentation Outline

1. IOA study of AL/RC care staff and stakeholders
  - a. Organizational & policy strategies to support emotional and mental well-being of care staff
2. Challenges and opportunities for recruiting and training care staff
  - a) Recent workforce initiatives in Oregon
3. Preview of a current LTC well-being learning collaborative
4. Break-out session: Well-being in the workplace
5. Debrief and wrap-up

# 1. Direct Care Staff Experiences: In their words



Fall 2022, the PSU/IOA study collected data through focus group and individual interviews with:



21 Resident Care Assistants



12 external colleagues including:

- RN consultants
- Staffing agency operators
- State policy staff
- AL/RC/MC operations managers
- Advocates

**“I love taking care of people... seeing [my residents] happy at the end of the day, even with everything that is going around them, it makes me so happy.**

So, **at the end of the day, even though the work is tough**, even though you feel like you've given up, you're stressed out, **once you see someone smile you also smile** because smiles are very contagious.

So, when you see someone is happy **you know the work you are doing is great work.**“

**“We brought entertainers outside**, and actually went around the building and entertained them. And I can remember **how happy everyone was**. Everyone was for the very first time. **It took a lot of effort.**

**But just seeing their faces**, you know, coming up with a solution, **and being creative was such an awesome feeling.**”

**Being a resident care assistant is meaningful work**

**“We're all a team** and that's what makes it more important to me...if we work as a team and we're in it together.”

**“We have a star system so we can give five stars a month to our coworkers when they do something outstanding.** And then at the end of the month if you've given multiple stars to people, **you get rewarded like a twenty-five or fifty-dollar gift certificate.**”

**How communities support care staff, including resources, training and leadership**

“Last week the girls at memory care had a **potluck** and invited, there was food I’d never tasted before it was so delicious. They were all sitting there **from different backgrounds, laughing, having a good time.**”

“I love how a lot of **staff came together and communicated their feelings** and their struggles. That's one of the things that I'm kind of really appreciative of, like, my coworkers right now is how much they communicate what they struggle with and what residents are struggling with, **and what works.**”

**Care staff support their own and their coworkers' well-being**

“An administrator had the little dorm refrigerator in his office stocked full of water and a **basket with some snacks, energy bars and nuts**, and some candy. And **to access this treasure trove of goodies you had to be able to tell the administrator what was one good thing you saw today in the facility.**

And then **what's one thing that you'd like to see us work on changing**, and what I really loved about that is the Administrator had to stop for a minute and have a face-to-face conversation with that caregiver and it makes them feel like, ‘Hey, **Someone's listening to me** because they are the face of the facility’.”

“We offered **gas cards for rural workers** who had a long drive.”

## Organizational supports matter to care staff

“We did **flexible schedules**, and we **offered overtime payments** for people that wanted to stay help.”

“Sometimes we **brought in interpreters**. If we were talking about a really serious subject, and we didn't feel like we were able to convey that without a really clear language person there.”

“Last week the girls at memory care had a **potluck** and invited, there was food I’d never tasted before it was so delicious. They were all sitting there **from different backgrounds, laughing, having a good time.**”

“I love how a lot of **staff came together and communicated their feelings** and their struggles. That's one of the things that I'm kind of really appreciative of, like, my coworkers right now is how much they communicate what they struggle with and what residents are struggling with, **and what works.**”

**Care staff support their own and their coworkers' well-being**

2. Challenges and opportunities for  
recruiting and training care staff  
and  
Recent workforce initiatives in  
Oregon



# Challenges in Recruiting & Considerations

- Saturated market, lack of diversity, historic underinvestment, systemic racism, pay battles across providers and specialties, workforce scheduling demands, etc.
  - *How do we recruit and hire the ideal candidate when 1:8 candidates show up?*
    - *Strategies for getting candidates to show up?*
  - *How do we address highly personalized scheduling needs in a staffing grid that drives fulltime employment?*
    - *Consider parttime, NOC differential, Flat base rate for all employees?*
  - *How do we meet the cost demands of the workforce without penalizing our seniors on a fixed income who are paying for care privately?*
    - *Do you know your payor case mix and how this impacts revenue and expenses?*
- *2030 predictions without state action....*

# Pay battles across specialties?



## 2021-2023

- *Members of Service Employees International Union 503 SEIU, homecare workers are bargaining for a new contract that covers wages, benefits, and workplace safety.*
- *LTC SNFs with SEIU 503 membership negotiated great gains amidst the pandemic, increasing CNA wages by as much as 30%.*

“This wage scale allows a CNA to stay a CNA,” said Penny Meyers, an Avamere worker in Clackamas. In the past, low wages drove good people to “go work fast food or go work at a hospital just to be able to keep a roof over their heads,” Meyers said.

# Oregon's Health Care Workforce Assessment February 2023

**HB 3261 passed in 2017-** *directs the Oregon Health Policy Board (OHPB) and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to produce a **biennial assessment** of the health care workforce needed to meet the needs of patients and communities throughout Oregon by **February 1 of each odd-numbered year** (2025)*

## 2023 Health Care Workforce Assessment:

- **Identified overarching goal:** To stabilize, expand, and diversify Oregon's health care workforce so that it can deliver culturally responsive, effective health care services to all.

### Findings:

- **Some professions** need increased compensation to attract new individuals and increase retention.
- **Many professions have** unclear career pathways and need more focus and attention to developing pathways to increasing skills, pay, and impact.
- **All professions** need more support around resiliency and well-being



## Other State Initiatives

- **Enhanced Wage Add-on Program-** *The Oregon Legislature approved the Enhanced Wage Add-on Program to support Home and Community-Based Services (**Assisted Living, Residential Care, Endorsed Memory Care, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and In-Home Care Agencies**) providers.*
- *The purpose is to support providers with retention of caregivers and CNAs by providing a Medicaid Enhanced rate to providers who pay wages at a specific threshold between October 1, 2021- June 30, 2023. **\$15/HR & \$15.50. This is ending, yet wages have continued to increase.***
- <https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/viewSingleRule.action?ruleVrsnRsn=298750>



...Continuation of  
State Initiatives

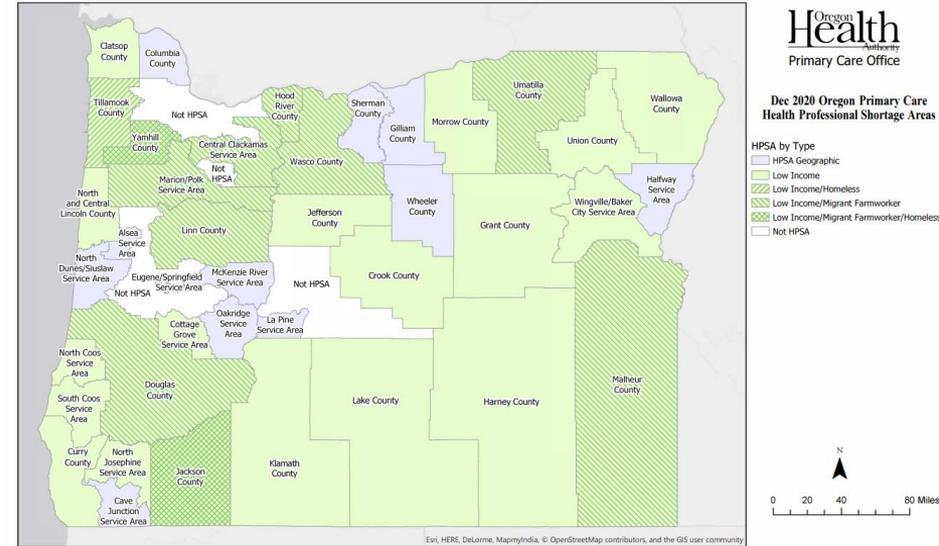
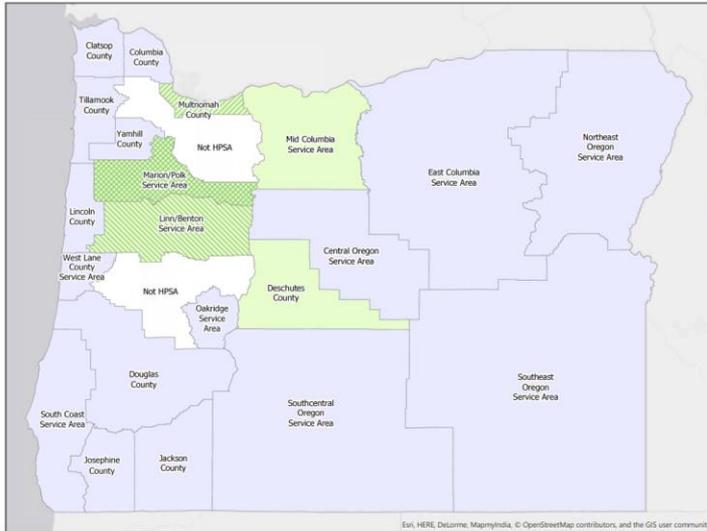
- **30-30-30 OHSU HB 5202 (2022)**- *The Oregon Legislature passed **HB 5202** to help address the **state's urgent health care workforce needs**.*
- *OHSU will increase the number of graduates from clinical programs by **30%** and increase learner's diversity to **30%** for underrepresented minorities by the year 2030.*
- *\$25 million has been invested to assist with tuition assistance and loan repayment. OHSU has committed to raising an additional \$25 million through fundraising.*
- <https://s3.amazonaws.com/cms.ipressroom.com/296/files/20229/202210030122/OHSU+303030+Ask+FINAL+202209.pdf>



...Continuation of  
State Initiatives  
Rural

- Oregon provides a Rural Practitioner Tax Credit for the following licensures up to \$5,000 annually
  - Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists
  - Dentists
  - Doctors of Medicine
  - Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine
  - Nurse Practitioners
  - Optometrists
  - Physician Assistants
  - Podiatrists
- <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-of-rural-health/tax-credits>

# Oregon Health Professional Shortage Areas



<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HPA/HP-PCO/Pages/Maps.aspx>



# 3. Leading Employee Well-being: Promoting Organizational Change in LTC Learning Collaborative

Forum on Aging  
May 16, 2023

Leah Brandis, MPH, RDN

# Disclosures

## Speaker:

Leah Brandis has nothing to disclose.

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# The vision:



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Project Manager,  
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**Bhagavati Mullock, MPH**

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# Specialist Team



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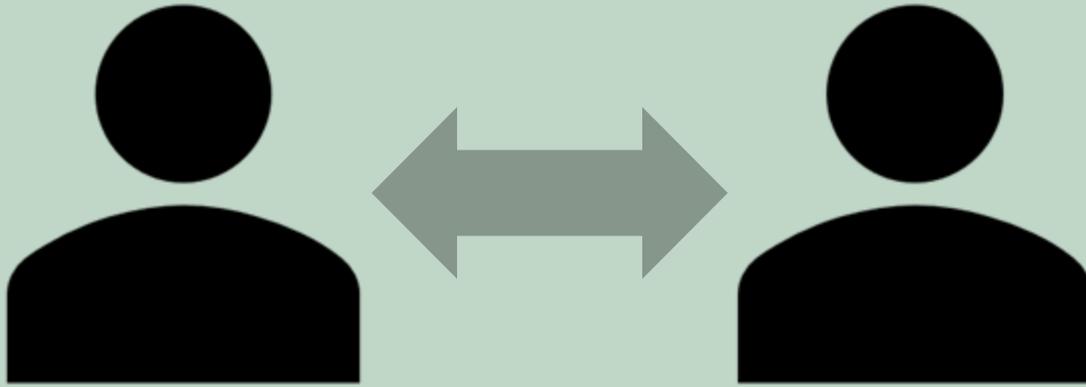
# Program structure

- 60 minute sessions x 12 weeks
  - Grounding exercise
  - Reflection activity
  - Didactic presentation
- Intersession activities
- Weekly coaching
- Runs April-June, 2023 with a cohort 2 in 2024

# 5 Essentials of Mental Health and Well-being



# All Teach, All Learn



# 44 Registrants

## Participant Map



## Participant Facilities

- 2 Adult Care Home/Adult Foster Home
- 7 Assisted Living Facility
- 14 Nursing Facility
- 8 Residential Care Facility
- 4 Unspecified
- 6 Other
  - Continuing Care Retirement Community
  - Intermediate Care Facility
  - Oregon Health Authority

## Participant Roles

- 19 Administrative Staff
- 13 Nursing Facility Staff
- 3 Clinical Staff or Healthcare Provider
- 2 Practice Management (Assessment Development QI)
- 4 Other
  - Human Resources Coordinator
  - RC/AL Administrator Executive Director Program Director
  - Executive Director
  - Program Director

### 3. Breakout: Creating a Culture of Staff Well-being

1. Review and discuss assigned reflection questions with 1-2 people seated near you
2. Discuss how your responses differ for rural communities, if at all
3. Please be prepared to share an example that you think is most promising or innovative in terms of direct care workers

# Reflective Questions

## **1. Protection from Harm Reflection Questions**

What opportunities exist for rest within their work schedule and workplace?

Are they adequate? How do we know if they are adequate?

## **2. Connection & Community Reflection Questions**

How might organizations create moments for social connection before or after formal meeting agendas?

## **3. Mattering at Work Reflection Questions**

Does every worker understand the organization's mission and how their work contributes to achieving it?

## **4. Opportunity for Growth Reflection Questions**

What does mentorship look like in the workplace? How could it be improved?

## **5. Work-life Harmony Reflection Questions**

Do workplace leaders model healthy behaviors and boundaries?

# Reflections so far



# 2023 Forum on Aging in Rural Oregon

## Thank you!

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# Staffing Study

Conducted by the Institute on Aging at Portland State University, funded by ODHS.

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## **Thank you**

Dawn Schoenthal of the Oregon Center for  
Nursing

To the study participants who generously shared  
their stories, experiences, and time

# Creative solutions to improve the AL/RC workplace

- Best practices for stress relief at work
  - Behavioral health supports, potluck meals, listening to staff concerns
  - Staff accolades
  - A “treasure trove of goodies”
  - Team building activities
- Flexible schedules that respond to family and personal needs

# Creative solutions to improve the AL/RC workplace

- Best practices in hiring that reduce unconscious bias
- Cultural humility
  - Language facilitator for staff trainings and meetings
  - Learn and recognize what holidays and cultural practices are meaningful to staff
- Increase fringe benefits, pay and rewards programs
- A forum for care workers to share and exchange ideas [ECHO]