

January 26, 2017

Secretary Linda Seemeyer
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
1 West Wilson St.
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Secretary Seemeyer,

Providers of long-term, residential, and home and community-based long-term care (hereinafter referred to as “long-term care”) continue to be plagued by serious workforce challenges. Anecdotal evidence supported by research conducted by several different organizations confirms that many Wisconsin providers are facing a crisis with caregiver* vacancies and are experiencing a lack of applicants for available jobs. And with the projected growth in the age 65+ population in the state, the long-term care workforce challenges are only going to get worse – unless we do something and do it now.

While many private and public organizations and agencies are doing good work in response to the long-term care workforce crisis, we believe efforts could be enhanced with better communication and coordination between entities. For example, there are groups working on programs to promote entry level training, writing grants to underwrite career development, promoting employer based school to work options, recruiting front-line caregivers from countries like Puerto Rico, and training older adults who wish to reenter the workforce. The challenge is “we” (public and private organizations, agencies, and employers) don’t necessarily know what others are doing. In other words, we don’t know what we don’t know.

LTC Workforce Summit: We propose to change that dynamic by first asking key stakeholders to meet, share information, and catalogue existing and proposed initiatives that advance the recruitment of people into long-term caregiver jobs. Our first step would be to understand and assess how **existing public programs/resources** could be better targeted to address the LTC workforce crisis. It would be invaluable for public entities to identify their current programs and resources that are or could be targeted to address the LTC workforce challenges. In doing so, entities might be in a position to suggest possible changes to current programs to achieve more lasting results.

Focusing first on public programs/resources at this forum, we also anticipate information gathering on interagency issues and identification of possible cooperative efforts to address the LTC workforce crises.

At the forum public entities would come prepared to address these questions:

- What current programs and resources are or could become available to address the LTC workforce crisis?
- Could our programs be revamped or otherwise modified to target the LTC workforce?
- How could interagency efforts lead to improved efforts to address LTC workforce issues?

We anticipate the forum could identify strategies to expand training opportunities, promote LTC careers, and provide scholarships for those seeking to enter the LTC field, for example.

We are pleased that DHS has agreed to convene this forum. We pledge to work with you and your team to ensure a productive meeting.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,



John Vander Meer
Executive Director
Wisconsin Health Care Association



John Sauer,
President/CEO
LeadingAge Wisconsin

*Caregivers include personal and direct care workers, resident assistants, persons with CBRF certification, certified nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses.