

State Will Expand WisCaregiver Careers Program

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<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/caregivers-elderly-s5.jpg>



CNA training and mentorship program to expand, program now recruiting qualified employers

MADISON - Gov. Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) have announced a \$6 million investment to expand the successful WisCaregiver Careers workforce development program. The program, administered by the Wisconsin Health Care Association and LeadingAge Wisconsin, was launched to address the shortage of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) in Wisconsin nursing homes. Following successful iterations of the program, the additional funding will expand the public-private partnership beginning summer 2022.



“Across Wisconsin, a strong healthcare and long-term care provider workforce is essential to the health of our entire state,” said Gov. Evers. “With an aging population, Wisconsin has been facing a healthcare workforce shortage for years—a challenge the COVID-19 pandemic only further underscored—and this funding will support a real solution to the state’s healthcare staffing needs that will benefit our entire state well beyond this pandemic.”

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Originally launched in 2018, WisCaregiver Careers has already engaged more than 300 of Wisconsin's 385 nursing homes in efforts to expand the healthcare workforce. A current iteration of the program, funded through a \$400,000 Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Fast Forward grant, is on track to exceed its goal of training 500 new CNAs for employment before ending in June.

"Supporting and strengthening Wisconsin's long-term care workforce is a critical part of addressing the healthcare workforce shortage statewide," said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. "With this investment, we will expand a program that is working and build our efforts to grow a workforce ready to support Wisconsin's health needs today and in the future."

The \$6 million investment, funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Nursing Home & Long-term Care Facility Strike Team program, will expand the current program including recruiting qualified employers to host as many as 3,000 new CNA training slots. Funds will support employee recruitment and success through retention bonuses, employer reimbursement and success bonuses, and mentorships.

The expanded WisCaregiver Careers program is currently recruiting qualified employers. To date, more than 181 employers have registered to participate in the program, with additional employers signing on. Interested long-term care facilities and nursing homes can contact the WisCaregiver Careers program for more information by visiting <http://wiscaregiver.com>.