



Prepare to Care

Iowa's Direct Care and Support Curriculum

Quality • Consistent • Careers



Q. Why are direct care professionals Iowa's largest workforce?

- A. Because we or someone we care about needs the supports and services of a direct care professional – and the need is growing rapidly. We want to receive those services and supports from qualified, well-trained staff.

Q. How do we know they are qualified and well-trained?

- A. One answer is whether they have completed training through Iowa's Prepare to Care training program.

Q. What can we do to find out about the training of those who work with us or those we care about?

- A. Just ask them or the organization they work for. Visit with them about what kind of training they have and how well it helps them do their daily job.

Q. What is special about Prepare to Care training?

- A. Prepare to Care training is Iowa's first comprehensive, consistent training that prepares direct care professionals to work in a variety of direct care settings. It was developed by educators, direct care professionals, and employers to prepare staff for the jobs they will perform.

Q. How can we find out more about Prepare to Care?

- A. Learn more about Prepare to care at www.iowapreparetocare.com or contact directcare@idph.iowa.gov.

Key Findings

In a pilot study, employers experienced up to a 59% reduction in turnover rates after implementing the Prepare to Care training.

Compared to a control group, Prepare to Care students were more likely to feel they had opportunities for advancement in their agencies and less likely to report heavy workloads.

More than 90% of students say they are satisfied with the training.

Important Facts About Prepare to Care Training

- » Prepare to Care teaches a person-centered approach, so the support and care received are about the individual, not about the staff or the agency.
- » Direct care professionals learn during their Core training about ethics, safety, infection control, and other basic knowledge.
- » Prepare to Care curriculum has been tested and evaluated – and shown to work in significantly increasing knowledge and skills, even for workers who have already been working in direct care jobs for many years.
- » Course modules combine for direct care professionals to achieve competency in the knowledge and skill areas required to provide defined job functions.
- » State-issued Advanced Training Certificates are earned by direct care professionals who complete coursework and pass a proctored exam at a community college.

“We just bounced ideas off of each other and that was probably one of the best experiences that I had with the whole training. I feel like I benefited, and I think our participants [the people we serve] benefited a ton from it.”
– Crystal Sales, Direct Care Professional

Who are Direct Care Professionals?

Direct Care Professional (DCP) is an umbrella name for the 78,000-strong workforce in Iowa. Direct care professionals are defined as individuals who provide supportive services and care to people experiencing health conditions, illnesses, or disabilities and receive compensation for such services. They may work in home-based, community-based, or facility settings. They have many job titles, such as direct support professional, supported community living worker, home health aide, direct care worker, universal worker, and many more.

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“It’s really meeting the needs of the community, the employers, and the consumers as well. The student feedback has been great and the students have really enjoyed the class, and learned a lot. There’s proven results that show that that is the case.”

– Jaime Haub, Prepare to Care Instructor

Prepare to Care was developed as part of the Direct Care Workforce Initiative, a legislatively directed project of the Iowa Department of Public Health to standardize training and increase stability of the direct care workforce.