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Letter: Iowa needs to raise standards for direct care providers

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FROM FRAN MANCI 2115 ELM ST., HAZEL GREEN, WIS. 1

At a June 20 public forum in Dubuque on the Direct Care Workforce Initiative, stakeholders from different perspectives shared why standard training and credentials for direct care professionals are needed.

As a certified nursing assistant and mentor at Stonehill Franciscan Services, I served on a panel with the CEO of a provider organization, another direct care professional and Iowa Sen. Pam Jochum. We all discussed how this initiative, through education standards and a board to issue credentials, will help ensure quality care for aging Iowans and people with disabilities.

Direct care professionals include CNAs like me, home health aides, supported community living professionals and many others.

At the forum, I emphasized that adequate direct care training and professional recognition are critical to retaining good workers. Iowans deserve to know that the people caring for their loved ones are qualified and skilled, and caregivers deserve recognition as professionals doing important work. The standard training and credentials proposed in this Iowa Department of Public Health project will accomplish that.

I appreciate the Telegraph Herald's coverage, and I want to reiterate the focus of the forum and this initiative. Continued funding from the Iowa Legislature to implement the project is needed and appreciated.

But the key message is that Iowa needs standard training and credentials for direct care professionals, and lawmakers must pass legislation establishing a board of direct care professionals as the first step to make it happen.

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