



THE MASSACHUSETTS LONG TERM CARE WORKFORCE

Fact Sheet

In keeping with its mission to ensure the highest quality of care for nursing facility residents, the Massachusetts Senior Care Association (Mass Senior Care) and its member providers have implemented strategies to recruit, develop, support and promote the highest quality workforce, as described below. We value the commitment and compassion of the more than 50,000 people employed in Massachusetts nursing homes, two-thirds of whom provide direct “hands on” care to residents as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and therapists.

Since the Massachusetts Legislature enacted the Nursing Home Quality Initiative in the State Fiscal Year 2001 budget, our collective efforts have helped reduce statewide CNA vacancy rates from 15% to 8% and improved CNA retention by 25% - nearly 75% of all CNAs have been employed at the same facility for one year or longer.

Wages/Benefits - *Massachusetts nursing facilities provide good wages and benefits*

- **Wages** - Despite years of chronic under funding by the state Medicaid program, Massachusetts nursing homes have increased nursing staff wages by an average of nearly 4% annually since 2000.
- **Health Insurance** - Virtually all Massachusetts nursing homes offer health insurance to their full time staff, contributing an average 75% of the total cost of an individual premium.
- **Tuition Assistance** - 85% of employers offer tuition assistance to support the professional and educational advancement of their workers, typically between \$500 - \$2,500 annually per employee.
- **Paid Time Off** - Massachusetts' nursing homes offer a wide array of benefits to their employees, including disability insurance, flexible work schedules and an average of 27 days of paid time off per year.

Education/Training – *Massachusetts nursing facilities support professional advancement for the long term care workforce*

- **Scholarships** – Since 1985, the Massachusetts Senior Care Foundation – Mass Senior Care’s research and education affiliate - has provided over \$2 million in scholarship funds to more than over 1,200 employees, most of them CNAs seeking to become licensed nurses.
- **Career Pathways** - Since 2001, approximately 170 long-term care employers, including nearly one-third of Massachusetts nursing homes, have developed career ladder programs through the state-funded **Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative (ECCLI)**, resulting in new skills, opportunities for advancement and increased wages for over 9,000 workers. With significant employer co-investment, ECCLI funding also supports related programs, including adult basic education, career counseling, and communication and supervisory training.
- **Nursing Education** - Over 60 nursing homes have partnered with community colleges and regional vocational schools to provide proprietary LPN programs for their staff. Employers cover tuition costs, and provide participating employees with flexible work schedules, continuation of full time benefits, and other needed supportive services. Their investment benefits residents, employers and CNAs – who will double their earning capacity as LPNs. The state Workforce Training Fund has helped some nursing homes to also implement LPN to RN programs.
- **Direct Care Worker Training** - Since 2001, the state-funded **Long-Term Direct Care Worker Scholarship Program**, administered by Mass Senior Care, has provided free CNA/Home Health Aide training to over 4,400 people statewide to prepare them to enter the long-term care workforce.

Promoting Diversity – *Massachusetts nursing facilities provide a supportive environment for immigrant workers.*

- **ESOL** – Long term care has become a “gateway of employment” for immigrants from around the world. Through ECCLI and other programs, Massachusetts’ nursing homes are providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), cultural diversity and communication training, and other programs and practices to ensure a supportive and respectful workplace environment for all employees. Employer-sponsored career ladder and nursing programs, combined with tuition reimbursement and Massachusetts Senior Care Foundation scholarships, are enabling more persons of diverse ethnic backgrounds to advance into nursing and supervisory positions.
- **Prevention of Discrimination** – Mass Senior Care has collaborated with the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General to prevent discrimination in the workforce through a series of educational programs to ensure employer compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.