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How Caring for Elders and People with Disabilities Can Save Our Economy

New York—As the nation seeks to bolster its sagging economy, PHI, a national leader in promoting quality direct-care jobs, has released an issue brief outlining why America should invest in its caregiving workforce. “Direct-Care Jobs and Long-Term Care: Untapped Engine for Job Creation and Economic Growth” [link] demonstrates that because of the sheer number of these occupations today—and their projected growth over the next decade--**direct-care jobs are uniquely positioned to help repair and stabilize our faltering economy.**

Outlining the economic impact of direct-care jobs, the issue brief notes:

- In 2006, only two other industries employed more people than long-term care: elementary and secondary schools and general and medical surgical hospitals.
- Personal and home care aides and home health aides are the second and third fastest-growing occupations in the nation’s economy.
- Direct-care jobs are a \$56 billion economic engine fueled by the personal income of 3 million workers who spend their money largely in their local communities.
- Investment in these jobs would benefit our economy in multiple ways: providing more income and greater economic opportunity to low-income workers while also strengthening health services for our frailest citizens.



“One in ten low-wage workers is a direct-care employee,” notes Dr. Dorie Seavey, PHI Director of Policy Research. “Investment in this workforce will create decent jobs that put money into the hands of people who will spend it. This is critical to addressing the deep recession our country is now facing.”

PHI National Policy Director Steve Edelstein emphasizes that, for the most part, the government already pays direct-care workers through programs such as Medicaid and Medicare. As a result, there is an existing pipeline to funnel more resources into expanding the workforce to meet growing demand for long-term care services.

“Investing more federal dollars in the caregiving infrastructure will have three immediate benefits,” he says. “It will get money circulating in the economy quickly, stabilize employment in low-income communities where one in 10 workers does direct care, and meet the needs of families across America who rely on direct caregivers to support their loved ones.”

For a copy of “Direct-Care Jobs and Long-Term Care: Untapped Engine for Job Creation and Economic Growth,” go to:

www.directcareclearinghouse.org/download/PHI%20FactSheetNo2.pdf

Additional information about the direct-care workforce is available through the National Clearinghouse on the Direct Care Workforce, www.PHInational.org/clearinghouse.

About PHI: PHI works to improve the lives of people who need home or residential care—by improving the lives of the workers who provide that care. For more information, visit www.PHInational.org.

