



## **New Report Highlights Major Challenges for Long-Term Care in Washington**

*New apprenticeship program offers partial solution to workforce shortage*

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**OLYMPIA** — Washington’s population is aging quickly and the state’s long-term care workforce is struggling to meet demand, a [new Workforce Board report shows](#). The report also highlights how long-term care poses major financial challenges for many Washington families.

But positive solutions like a new registered apprenticeship program for licensed practical nurses offer a path forward to better wages and working conditions for frontline long-term care workers, the report says.

The report was commissioned by the Washington Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) on behalf of the Long-Term Care Workforce Initiative, a partnership of private long-term care employers, healthcare providers, educators and state agencies focused on industry challenges and creating solutions. It was recently shared with the Legislature.

Washington families, employers, workers and taxpayers face significant challenges around long-term care. For example, Washington’s overall population is expected to grow 5% by 2030. But the population over age 65 will grow by 30% over that period.

More than half of Washingtonians over age 65 are expected to need paid, long-term care for an average of 3.2 years, the report shows. These paid services cost from \$1,700-\$9,000 per month.

Many long-term care workers face their own challenges, including burnout and financial pressures. Nearly half of home care workers received public assistance in 2020, for example. Workforce turnover is high – averaging about 50% a year for direct care workers.

This workforce includes many women, people of color, and immigrants. Women make up about 85 percent of the workforce.

“If the status quo is allowed to remain and the (long-term care) workforce shortage is not adequately addressed, Washington state will face an even greater healthcare crisis by 2030 when the number of individuals needing (long-term care) services will dramatically outpace the number of available workers,” the report reads.

The Workforce Board’s Licensed Practical Nurse Registered Apprenticeship Program is one of many positive solutions. Created in collaboration with many partners, the program creates a new career path for frontline healthcare workers to become licensed practical nurses. These jobs offer better pay and benefits, and new career options for those in the long-term care workforce.

Recommendations from the report:

- Continue funding the LPN Registered Apprenticeship Program, and expand resources for Edmonds College, which provides educational support for apprentices.
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for long-term care providers.
- Double the Quality Improvement Program nursing staff, which offers technical assistance for long-term care providers.
- Review state law to explore expanding where nursing technicians can work.
- Provide ongoing funding for the Long-Term Care Initiative.

Workforce Board staff testified Monday to the House Health Care and Wellness Committee about this issue. [Watch online at TVW.](#)

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*About the Workforce Board:*

*The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of business, labor and government dedicated to helping Washington residents succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employer needs for skilled workers.*

*The Board’s vision is that every Washington community is thriving, inclusive and economically resilient. Learn more at <https://wtb.wa.gov/>.*

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