

# Promising Models and Innovative Approaches: The Direct Care Workforce

**Robert Espinoza, MPA**, Executive Vice President of Policy, PHI





**PHI**

**QUALITY CARE  
THROUGH  
QUALITY JOBS**



## A Statistical Snapshot: Current Size & Future

Total Population

### Direct Care Workers

4.5 million

Home Care Workers

2.3 million

Residential Care Aides

669,000

Nursing Assistants

581,000

Job Openings (2019-2029)

7.4 million

Photo: **Venecia Bradley**

CARE PARTNER AT VILLAS OF KILLEARN LAKES, TALLAHASSEE, FL

Source: PHI. 2022. *Direct Care Workers in the United States: Key Facts*. New York, NY: PHI.



**PHI**

QUALITY CARE  
THROUGH  
QUALITY JOBS

## The Value of Direct Care Worker Models

- ▶ The LTSS clientele is rapidly growing and evolving.
- ▶ Workforce interventions that support people with serious illness can also support the financial security of workers, LTSS for recipients, and the overall stability of the sector.
- ▶ Innovation is important—and so is a robust evidence base.

## Home Care Workers and Heart Disease

- ▶ Home care workers increasingly provide long-term and posthospitalization support to individuals with heart failure.
- ▶ They have a crucial role in identifying changes in a client's condition.
- ▶ Many home care workers reporting feeling unprepared and lacking heart failure training.

Source: Sterling MR et al. "It's Like They Forget That the Word 'Health' Is in 'Home Health Aide'": Understanding the Perspectives of Home Care Workers Who Care for Adults With Heart Failure. *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2018 Dec 4;7(23):e010134. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.118.010134.

### Home Care Workers and Heart Disease

- “Generally, HCWs (1) feel overworked and undervalued; (2) find communication and care to be fragmented; (3) are dedicated to clients and families but are caught in the middle; and, despite this, (4) love their job. With respect to HF, HCWs (1) find it frightening and unpredictable; (2) are involved in HF self-care without any HF training; and (3) find the care plan problematic.”

Source: Sterling MR et al. "It's Like They Forget That the Word 'Health' Is in 'Home Health Aide'": Understanding the Perspectives of Home Care Workers Who Care for Adults With Heart Failure. *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2018 Dec 4;7(23):e010134. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.118.010134.



## Home Care Workers and Heart Disease

- ▶ “Interventions that provide HF-specific training and aim to improve communication between members of the home health care team may enhance HCWs’ ability to care for adults with HF and potentially lead to better patient outcomes.”

Source: Sterling MR et al. "It's Like They Forget That the Word 'Health' Is in 'Home Health Aide'": Understanding the Perspectives of Home Care Workers Who Care for Adults With Heart Failure. *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2018 Dec 4;7(23):e010134. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.118.010134.

## Care Connections Senior Aide, PHI

- ▶ Integrates direct care workers into consumer care teams and as key players in care coordination
- ▶ Can improve jobs, enhance care, reduce emergency department usage, and prevent rehospitalizations.
- ▶ Career advancement is limited for direct care workers—both within direct care and beyond

Source: Campbell, Stephen, Angelina Del Rio Drake, Robert Espinoza, and Kezia Scales. 2021. *Caring for the Future: The Power and Potential of America's Direct Care Workforce*. Bronx, NY: PHI.



## Care Connections Senior Aide, PHI

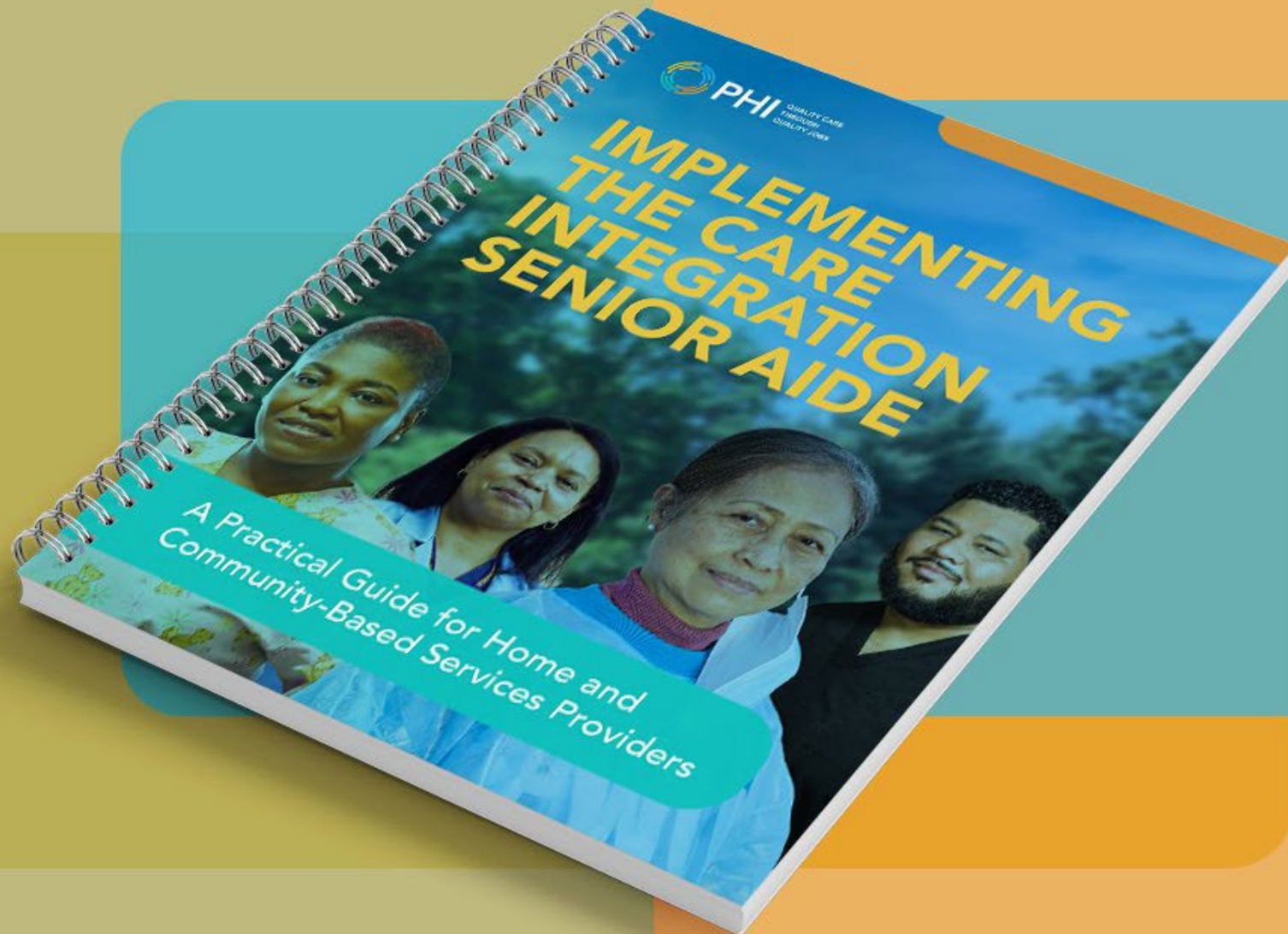
- ▶ 14 workers were trained and eight were deployed as full-time CCSAs (following 240 hours of training in chronic disease knowledge; communication skills; enhanced observe, record, and report skills; and care team participation).
- ▶ Three RNs were trained to oversee the aides.
- ▶ More than 1,400 ICS clients benefited in the first 18 months.

Source: Campbell, Stephen, Angelina Del Rio Drake, Robert Espinoza, and Kezia Scales. 2021. *Caring for the Future: The Power and Potential of America's Direct Care Workforce*. Bronx, NY: PHI.

## Care Connections Senior Aide, PHI

- ▶ Results: 8 percent reduction in the rate of emergency room admission among the 1,400 consumers impacted, reduced caregiving strain among family members, and improved job satisfaction among home care workers
- ▶ Bringing this model to scale would require a large-scale investment and a stronger evidence base.

Source: Campbell, Stephen, Angelina Del Rio Drake, Robert Espinoza, and Kezia Scales. 2021. *Caring for the Future: The Power and Potential of America's Direct Care Workforce*. Bronx, NY: PHI.



## Dementia Specialist

- ▶ By 2050, ~14 million older Americans will be living with Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia.
- ▶ While there exists a profound need for more dementia specialists, the health care industry also needs a better baseline of geriatric and dementia care competence occupations.

Source: Scales, Kezia. "It's Time to Build Dementia Care Competency in Direct Care." *PHI Newsroom*. PHI. June 18, 2019. <https://www.phinational.org/its-time-to-build-dementia-care-competency-in-direct-care/>.



## Dementia Specialist

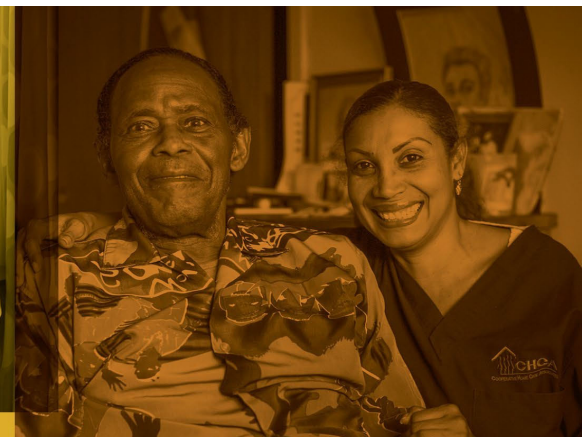
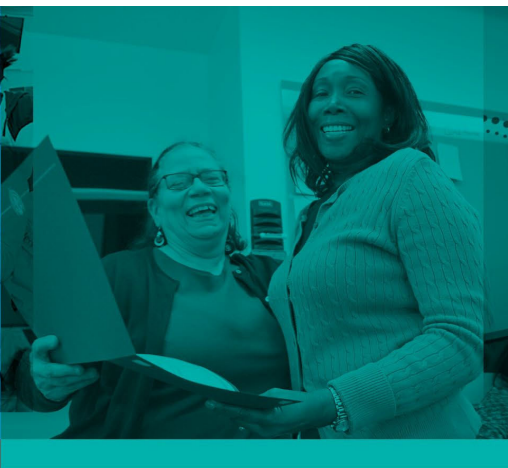
- ▶ Dementia Care Specialist Training Program in California
  - ▶ Skills: 1) global features of dementia; 2) symptoms and disease progression; 3) ability to manage challenging behaviors and communication problems; 4) contributors to caregiver stress and how to manage caregiver needs; and 5) ability to refer members and caregivers to community resources.

Source: Flatt, Jason D. et al. 2018. *Dementia Care Specialist Workforce in California: Role, Practice, Training, and Demand*. San Francisco, CA: UCSF Health Workforce Research Center on Long-Term Care.

## Dementia Specialist

- ▶ “Some health plans utilized DCSs in a formal way, such as having them serve on an Interdisciplinary Care Teams (ICTs) and consult on a member’s dementia-related care coordination needs.”
- ▶ “Other health plans utilized DCSs in less formal ways and in informal consultant roles, such as to provide education or advice to other care managers and staff who sought out support for dementia-related cases.”

Source: Flatt, Jason D. et al. 2018. *Dementia Care Specialist Workforce in California: Role, Practice, Training, and Demand*. San Francisco, CA: UCSF Health Workforce Research Center on Long-Term Care.



**Robert Espinoza, MPA**

Executive Vice President of Policy, PHI

[respinoza@PHInational.org](mailto:respinoza@PHInational.org)

261 Madison Ave, Suite 913 • New York, NY 10016 • [PHInational.org](http://PHInational.org)

© 2023 PHI

