



VAL HOYLE
Labor Commissioner

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March 22, 2021

New nursing assistant apprenticeship program will support residents and staff at nursing facilities

Nursing facilities and other places of care for vulnerable community members have struggled with high staffing turnover of nursing assistants and frontline staff for decades.

Long-Term CareWorks' CNA Apprenticeship is the first certified nursing apprenticeship program in Oregon. It was approved last week by the Oregon State Apprenticeship and Training Council. In an exciting partnership, SEIU 503 and a group of nursing facility providers worked together to set it up to train and certify nursing assistants. It will make a positive impact for nursing facility residents and workers who support them, and build a stable workforce for long-term care employers.

"This apprenticeship program will give workers access to paid on-the-job training to build their skills and earning potential, while also offering long-term care providers a high-quality pool of job applicants," says Labor Commissioner Val Hoyle. "In college, I worked as a nursing assistant in a memory care home. It is very physically demanding work and usually low paid. High turnover of qualified, experienced staff has direct impacts on the quality of care for residents, and I'm excited about how this program will address that."

The Long-Term CareWorks' CNA Apprenticeship will provide certified classroom instruction and paid on-the-job training. It will operate with a competency-based model, with structured mentorship and small cohorts of ten apprentices. After completing the yearlong program, each apprentice will have mastered the skills needed to be a qualified nursing assistant and meet industry standards. The program will be available to employers and employees in the long-term care industry throughout the state.

Additional wraparound services will be available to support participants through childcare and transportation assistance and stipends for supplies and housing.

Patsy Richards, the Director of Long-Term CareWorks, says that the program has already paid dividends for the inaugural cohort. "Every time I talk with the apprentices in our program, I see our life-changing potential for both long-term care consumers and the workers who support them. In the next few months, Long-Term CareWorks' CNA Apprenticeship will touch hundreds of lives throughout the state."

"In my 10 years working at nursing homes, I have seen the toll that turnover and vacancies have on our seniors and people with disabilities," said Ron Strle, a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and SEIU member in Hood River. "I'm excited that the nursing homes are working with



our union to address this issue by investing in an apprenticeship program. By supporting staff we can attract and retain more people, and that's a great step forward for long-term care.”

“The Long-Term CareWorks CNA Apprenticeship program will allow more Oregonians the opportunity to find meaningful careers and opportunities within long term care,” said Ryan Delamarter, Vice President of Prestige Care, Inc., which operates long term care facilities in the Pacific Northwest and is a one of the nursing facility providers in the partnership. “Now more than ever, Oregon needs more CNAs and caregivers in long term care. This apprenticeship program will support our frontline workers and help in meeting the significant care needs of our aging population.”

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