

# Sustaining the Impact of CARES Act Investments in Home Care Workers

- EOHHS invested over \$3 million in CARES Act funding to support home care workers in 23 agencies during COVID-19.
- Provided wage supports to stabilize the workforce, supplement night/weekend wages, and ensure services for vulnerable patients.
- Supported behavioral health certificate training for home care workers.

## How did EOHHS support home care workers?

We focused on the lowest-paid workers (nursing assistants and homemakers) for these benefits. EOHHS:

- Provided \$2 million to 20 home health agencies to support 1,819 existing and 110 newly hired CNAs/homemakers.
- Provided additional \$1 million to home health agencies to support workers in December 2020.
- These incentives resulted in over 100 workers hired, 250 workers increasing hours to 32+/week, median wages for CNAs increased by \$0.56/hour, and night/weekend premiums increased by \$1.49/hour and 144 workers were reimbursed for mileage and bridge tolls.

## How did this impact employment trends?

Total employment of CNAs and Homemakers remained nearly unchanged while total employment statewide fell by 2.0% during the same time period (September – December 2020). These incentives kept people working who may have left otherwise and resulted in a more stable workforce.

## How did you address behavioral health needs, since over 50% of home care patients have a BH diagnosis?

Home health agencies report that patients with behavioral health diagnoses are particularly challenging to serve. We worked with Rhode Island College to create a behavioral health certification in both Spanish and English. 58 staff members from 11 agencies participated in the training and received a \$500 incentive for doing so. We provided stipends and paid for administrative costs.

## What did the Home Health Agencies say about this program?

Previously, home health agencies frequently reported that night and weekend shifts are hard to fill. Following the program, home health agencies consistently reported that Resiliency funds enabled them to; hire more staff; motivate employees to work additional and hard to fill shifts; reduce absenteeism and turnover.

**“The money was a great motivator and a very welcome thank you after a long year.”**

Home Health Agency

**“The [behavioral health] training made me more aware of where the patient is coming from... This pandemic has isolated many...so I think when we do go to see them, they like to share a lot more than usual.”**

Home Care Worker

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