



# WhoWillCare.net Fact Sheet

- Most of the nearly 8 million Americans with development disabilities and mental retardation rely on private supports and services.
- Up to 80 million aging Americans will depend on some form of private support and services by 2050.
- The demand for support professionals is expected to grow 62% by 2010.
- There are 433,799 individuals with developmental disabilities served by residential settings nationwide.
- 108,044 of people with disabilities in residential settings hold jobs and contribute to the communities where they live every day.
- Support professionals are the backbone of these community-based services.
- Medicaid provides the vast majority of funding for support professionals. The state-federal program helps to keep people healthy and enable individuals to lead personally enriching lives by contributing to the communities around them. In addition to physician, hospital and clinic services, Medicaid provides a vital - and sometimes the only - funding source for critical services.
- This nationwide community-based support system is at risk. Many providers are curtailing services. At the same time, many states are placing thousands of people who need various levels of support and services on waiting lists. In 2001, a nationwide estimate determined that 600,000 individuals were on formal state waiting lists for residential services.
- There are an additional 650,000 people with disabilities living at home with parents who are aging. When parents become too frail or die, the pressure on community-based services will become even more acute.
- Without quality and continuity, people with disabilities can become more isolated, while productivity and self-esteem spiral downward.
- A 2002 study showed that support professional wages had increased only \$0.82 over eight years versus a \$4.16 wage increase for fast food workers over the same period.
- A 2003 report showed that community-based support professionals made an average median wage of just \$8.68 an hour – compared to the median wage of \$11.76 for all U.S. workers. As a result, many of these workers are forced to work two jobs in order to feed their own families.
- Increases for comparable workers in the public sector and for fast food workers have been three to four times higher. Both the dollar amount and percentage increase in hourly wage rates for direct support professionals are far below that of comparable job categories as well as the national minimum wage.
- Working mothers who graduate from federal welfare-to-work programs are unable to take direct support professional jobs because they do not meet welfare-to-work wage minimums.

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- State funded systems, including those that rely on Medicaid, are held to fixed appropriations based upon state public policy choices and economic conditions and are not as responsive as the private sector in adjusting to labor supply and demand factors.
- Health insurance premium increases far exceed general inflation, forcing providers to seek or increase employee contribution.
- Many support professions cannot afford to pay the employee portion of health insurance premiums – meaning fewer employees participate in this benefit than in other industries. Professional caregivers and their families often cannot expect to receive the same level of healthcare they provide.
- Support professional positions turnover between 40% and 75% each year.
- More federal funding is needed to bring the wages of professional caregivers in line with comparable jobs in related sectors. Other potential solutions include additional funding for childcare, transportation vouchers and tax and health incentives.

### **About WhoWillCare.net**

WhoWillCare.net is a campaign to protect America's support professionals, sponsored by ANCOR and United Cerebral Palsy. Visit [www.WhoWillCare.net](http://www.WhoWillCare.net) to demonstrate your support to millions of Americans with disabilities who need quality community-based support, and the professionals who provide it. For more information about the professional caregiver crisis, visit [www.WhoWillCare.net](http://www.WhoWillCare.net) or call (202) 973-7114.

### **About ANCOR**

The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) is a nonprofit trade association representing and advocating on behalf of the more than 800 private providers of services and supports for 385,000 Americans with disabilities. ANCOR is distinguished in the provider industry by its balance of leading practices, resources and advocacy for member agencies and the people and families they serve and support. For more information, visit [www.ancor.org](http://www.ancor.org).

### **About United Cerebral Palsy**

United Cerebral Palsy is one of the nation's leading organizations serving and advocating for the more than 54 million Americans with disabilities. Most UCP consumers are people with disabilities other than cerebral palsy. Through its nationwide network, United Cerebral Palsy offers services to individuals, families and communities such as job training and placement, physical therapy, individual and family support, early intervention, social and recreation programs, community living, state and local referrals, and instruction on how to use technology to perform everyday tasks. For more information, visit [www.ucp.org](http://www.ucp.org).