

THE VOICE

 **Home Care**
Association of America

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WINTER
2021
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A PUBLICATION OF THE HOME CARE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



LEADING HOME CARE INTO the Future



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Home Care
Association of America

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ABOUT HCAOA | As the industry's leading trade organization representing home care agencies and their suppliers across the country, the Home Care Association of America (HCAOA) strives to provide member agencies with practical resources to enhance operations and margins and improve training and quality within our industry.

MISSION | The Home Care Association of America is the trusted voice of the home care industry, strengthening our members through advocacy, education and research.

VISION | Home care empowers all those in need to live their best lives wherever they call home.

PURPOSE | To provide leadership, representation, and education for the advancement of home care and provide a strong unified voice to speak to the issues of concern within the Home Care industry.

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MESSAGE FROM HCAOA Executive Director VICKI HOAK



“Never let the things you can’t do stop you from doing what you can.”

– former President Ronald Reagan

The past two years have been hard. 2020 hit us with the COVID-19 pandemic and 2021 witnessed us working hard to navigate a new normal and come back.

However, you, and the invaluable work you and your staff do for older adults and their families, and individuals with disabilities continually inspire the Home Care Association of America. We have walked alongside many of your organizations and have watched as you have fully embodied the quote above.

This issue of *The Voice* seeks to build you up and better position the home care industry for success with data-informed insights and information you can use. We are committed to strengthening you - our members - through advocacy, education and research for the advancement of home care. Though COVID is not gone yet, the opportunities for and recognition of our industry abounds now more than ever before.

The demand for home care has grown and will continue to grow as US adults age, need care, and seek to remain at home. Our industry has been strained by the many effects of the pandemic - difficulty hiring and retaining staff, changing policies and mandates, growing demand for vaccinations and reciprocal vaccine hesitancy from staff, wage increases luring staff away, child care challenges and the list goes on.

How can our industry rise above these challenges and succeed in the upcoming year?

First, we must remember the value of our work and convey that to others. Home and Community Based Services are needed, valuable, and deserve to be recognized for the ways our organizations and staff support the nation’s aging population. The Home Care Association of America pledges to listen to our members and provide a strong, unified voice to

advocate for issues that matter, like increasing access to quality home care through reimbursement and supporting a robust home care workforce.

How will you grow awareness about your organization’s worth in your community?

Second, we must do the right thing. To be seen as quality care, home care organizations must provide excellent care and operate with trustworthy business practices. As a member, you signed the [HCAOA’s Code of Conduct](#), which provides a framework of core values and person-centered standard of care.

As the HCAOA advocates for members, how will you ensure your business practices meet or exceed standards to build your credibility - both in your community and with your legislators?

Finally, we must work together to strengthen the HCBS industry. HCAOA diligently works to support and strengthen you with practical resources to enhance your operations, your margins and improve training and quality within our industry.

Many of you believe strongly in this point, which has been evidenced in the significant growth of HCAOA by more than 500 new members this year. We thank you for your trust and pledge our commitment to each of you as we provide research, education, advocacy and a leading voice for home care this year.

As we recount the challenges of 2020-2021, may we do our best to drive our industry forward and be challenged by former President Lyndon B. Johnson’s words,

“Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose.”

– former President Lyndon B. Johnson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicki Hoak". The signature is fluid and cursive.

THE EVOLUTION OF HOME CARE

| An Interview with Honor Co-Founder and CEO Seth Sternberg |

How Honor's acquisition of Home Instead impacts the market – weaving tech resources into local agencies, resulting in more, happier caregivers and better care

The world's eye has been on the impending challenges of caring for an aging population. In the US alone, the Medicare population will double in the next 30 years—growing from 40 to 80 million people—significantly straining existing programs.

Foreseeing this boom, the pace of mergers and acquisitions (M&As) among health systems, home health and home care players has increased significantly over the past two years. Partnerships have been forged, similar groups joined and smaller agencies and practices absorbed as health executives strive to carve out their pathway of care for aging adults.

Some M&As have focused on joining forces with organizations providing similar services to cut costs. Others have honed in on the differing strengths of the organizations and building a complimentary network.

The Honor–Home Instead acquisition falls into the second category—pairing a technology and operations platform and a large home care provider network with the goal of multiplying innovation and the number of people served.

Honor Co-Founder and CEO Seth Sternberg sat down with the Home Care Association of America to discuss what prepared Honor for the Home Instead acquisition, the ways it will change the industry and how he foresees home care evolving.



ABOUT: Seth Sternberg | Co-Founder & CEO of Honor

Seth Sternberg is the Co-Founder & CEO of Honor. Prior to Honor, Seth was the Co-Founder and CEO of Meebo, which brought instant messaging to the web and reached close to half the internet population in the United States. Meebo was acquired by Google, where Seth became a Product Director working on the Google Identity Platform, and then within GoogleX. Seth started his career with IBM's Corporate Development group after graduating from Yale. In his free time, he enjoys cycling, working with entrepreneurs, and spending time with his wife and two children.

Prior to founding Honor, Seth Sternberg co-founded Meebo, which was acquired by Google, where he became a Product Director. What turned a successful Silicon Valley entrepreneur down the road to developing a robust technology and operations platform that would revolutionize the staffing and delivery of home care?

His mother's slower driving, actually.

"I was in a car with my mother driving home from an airport and observed her driving slower. My brain went to, 'Five years from now, am I going to have to go to my mother and tell her she has to move into a facility? That would be bad,'" shared Sternberg. "[Starting Honor] literally came from me not wanting to ever have that conversation with my mother. It turns out that it is a really, really hard problem to solve."

Surveying the Terrain

From its founding in 2014, Honor sought to solve the problem of how society can better care for older adults, beginning with building their own home care agency.

"As we built the home care agency, we quickly realized why it is such a fragmented industry that is hard to scale," said Sternberg. "We started building bits of technology to solve those problems and make the human experiences better."

By developing small bits of technology to solve problems and maintaining a focus on their overall goal, Honor began to grow into a home care company that helps older adults live safely in their own homes through reliable, high-quality care.

"When you're building tech, people often say, 'Move fast and break things.' That does not work in senior care," Sternberg smiled. "We took a really deliberate path to not offer tech to anyone else and only ourselves first. Then, we began to slowly start offering to others. Then, when it was ready, we went big."

Identifying Direction

Specifically focusing on "care for the care pro" quickly became a major driver behind technology efforts. Sternberg and his team realized "if we did a better job caring for the care pros, then we would create a better overall experience for older adults too."

From this, the Honor Care Network (HCN) began. The tech platform is designed to create better human experiences and offer the home care industry a way to expand its capacity to care for more people, growing faster and more sustainably.

With a solid technology and operations platform, Honor then began to look at how to connect their technology with other home care agencies. Partnering first with local agencies that had deep connections with the community, Honor sought to identify their operational issues and how to address them—tweaking their technology and operations platform as they went.

The gradual growth was coupled with lots of research and development, rounds of financing and investors closely watching. Sternberg and his team were careful to ensure they were building a product that was and will continue making an impact.

"I don't want to spend my life on a product that doesn't change the world," he shared. "We had to see that we produced faster growth [in home care agencies], which can only happen because you're producing better jobs for care pros, which can only happen when you're producing better client experiences for clients and improving the business of the underlying agency."

Scaling Delivery with a Connected Partner

Following the years of research and designing solutions, Honor began looking for a partner. Home Instead quickly rose to the top of the list.

When Sternberg and his team saw the similarities between Home Instead's network and the local agencies Honor previously partnered with, "we saw we could take the operations and technology platform that we'd been offering to independent agencies and [significantly increase] the impact—increased growth rate, quality and more consistency."

Honor's technology and operations will change Home Instead's service model by combining the best parts of both companies. The changes will not come until Honor's team learns more about Home Instead's hyper-personal network and determining the optimal way to put them together.

"With absolute certainty, putting them together is going to result in expanding our capacity to care," Sternberg emphasized. "The operations model will produce better jobs for care pros, better and more consistent care for clients and will produce new products and services that we can't even imagine right now."

\$2.1 Billion

in home care services revenue by
Honor-Home Instead companies,
***making it the largest player in the
\$500 billion home care industry.***

\$325 Million

equity raised by Honor since 2014

Impact on the Home Care Market

The combined Honor–Home Instead companies now represent more than \$2.1 billion in home care services revenue, making it the largest player in the \$500 billion home care industry. Since 2014, Honor has raised total equity of \$325 million.

Sternberg does not believe the acquisition of Home Instead will drive up the pricing of home care.

"When you bring tech to an industry, generally speaking, you're trying to build a better product that can serve more people at better prices. Does it change the industry dynamic? Yeah, of course," he noted.

Sternberg added, "When there is competition, everybody gets better. The amount of M&A and financing in general that is happening around care for older adults will create new forms of competition for everyone, and that will push everyone to get better. Ultimately, who benefits is the consumer—older adults—and I think that is good."

The new Honor–Home Instead company will drastically influence the future of the industry.

"Honor is giving this operations and technology platform to local Home Instead franchise owners to enable them to deliver better care. They will be able to staff new clients faster than anyone else, with more appropriate care pros who churn at lower rates," he explained. "What's amazing is that they are still the local agency, but they are now given this crazy capability that has had over \$150 million of R&D invested in it."

Evolving to Address the Workforce Dilemma

The recurring issue facing home care agencies is the lack of caregivers. In a survey of HCAOA members, more than 66% of respondents said they have 11 or more open positions. Many noted that lack of caregivers is the biggest challenge facing their company. HCAOA members are losing from dozens to thousands of hours of business as a result. The question then is, where do the families go to obtain care for their loved ones?

Sternberg agreed this area must evolve in the next five years. "The number one thing that home care has to solve is that it has to create better jobs for care pros or it is going to be extraordinarily challenged."

Honor's technology and operations platform claims to have enabled agency owners in many markets to staff four times faster than other agencies. Sternberg says it is because Honor's platform is creating better jobs for caregivers.

"When you look statistically at what makes a happy care pro, the #1 statistical correlate is do they feel like they are treated with respect," shared Sternberg. "The way [care pros] define respect is: Did you pay what you said you'd pay me? Did you pay me on time? Did you put me into houses that are appropriate to my skills? And do you guilt trip me [into taking shifts I do not want to do]? The #2 correlate is whether they are getting the hours they need."

If you can provide respect to caregivers in these ways, you make yourself an employer of choice, according to Sternberg. By looking at data and developing ways for care pros to be respected and heard, Honor is influencing the industry and making their open positions more desirable to job seekers.



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Working Smarter with Better Tools





Beyond Basic Reporting: Turning Home Care Data into BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

The shift to electronic medical records, digital systems and cloud computing has made capturing and compiling large amounts of data easier, facilitating an explosion of data in home care. Adopting data-driven business solutions can help make organizations more resilient, efficient and improve their operations.

The Challenge for Most Home Care Agencies

While the ability to capture and compile data is easier, the home care industry tends to lag behind others in the health-care continuum when it comes to moving beyond basic reporting. By focusing only on reporting, many organizations miss key insights that would inform the in-depth analyses of their business processes. Others are drowning in data they aren't using.

Home care agencies must realize that data points alone are virtually useless.

Data must be turned into insights that can be put into action to inform decisions. That means not just moving from paper records to electronic records, but eliminating silos between the departmental databases that house them. When information is siloed by specific departments, it becomes extremely difficult to gain a holistic view of operations and client outcomes.



**By Erin Baker,
Senior Solutions Engineer**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

As a Senior Solutions Engineer at AlayaCare, Erin Baker helps home care agencies see the value of cloud-based home care technologies to help their patients live a better quality of life in the comfort of their own homes. She graduated from Western University with a Health Science degree, and in 2017 completed a Master of Management of Innovation at the University of Toronto. Erin brings a wealth of knowledge with experiences in implementing multiple US-based agencies and finding creative solutions for business and operational challenges through technology.



AlayaCare is a provider of revolutionary cloud-based home health care software. With an end-to-end solution spanning clinical documentation, back-office functionality, client and family portals, remote patient monitoring and mobile care worker functionality, we offer a platform for agencies to propel toward innovation and home care of the future.

Learn more about AlayaCare by visiting www.alayacare.com

Shifting to a Data-Driven Mindset

Home care providers can leverage their systems to do more by unlocking actionable business intelligence to dramatically improve operations.

With a comprehensive view of their organization’s data, agencies can drive transformation, eliminate inefficiencies and quickly adapt to industry changes.

Business intelligence encompasses the strategies and technologies that organizations use for data analysis with the goal of obtaining insights to help guide strategic

The overall purpose of business intelligence is to simplify data analysis, but there are complex technologies and processes involved in transforming raw data into information that can be easily analyzed.

To capture business intelligence, the right software is needed to pull in source data (like CRM, EHR, billing, payroll, scheduling, HR, etc.) into a data warehouse where it can be analyzed. This analysis can then be transformed into business intelligence solutions in the form of reports, dashboards, key performance indicators (KPIs) or predictive analytics.

Benefits of Business Intelligence in Home Care

Business intelligence cuts down on tedious processes. Data and reports that used to take hours (or days!) to produce can be published in minutes—providing actionable information to the right person at the right time. It is a reliable, evidence-driven way to reduce costs, improve performance, bolster client care and predict issues that may arise.

Data can be tied to key areas, like on-time client visits, client satisfaction, employee retention, reporting and billing. Business intelligence can cover all facets of a business, from HR to finance, marketing to quality of care, even optimal use of personal support workers to client conversion.

Metrics like these ensure optimal client outcomes by supporting caregivers on the road, helping coordinators with large loads stay on track, maintaining growth mode in the agency, anticipating future challenges, meeting government reporting requirements and much more.

Business intelligence cuts down on tedious processes . . . and are valuable for an array of stakeholders to make sound decisions on the most pressing matters.

Business intelligence insights are valuable for an array of stakeholders to make sound decisions on the most pressing matters. For instance, CEOs can use data analytics to keep tabs on issues related to an agency’s reputation, risk and compliance. Supervisors can watch task management or average travel time. Finance can monitor employee retention rate and billing cycle reports. Schedulers can check out overtime reports and forecast resources for next month and more.

The benefits are seemingly endless and, when used effectively, the right data can help with anything, from compliance to hiring efforts. Anything deemed important by an agency can be wrapped up in a metric and analyzed.

An Intelligent Path Forward

Gathering, analyzing and incorporating data analytics, key performance indicators and business intelligence can feel daunting, particularly for agencies with limited in-house IT. Yet, developing and leveraging analytics is easier now more than ever, particularly if all data is housed in the same software solution.

Consider researching and utilizing software to build up your agency and position it for the future. There is a treasure trove of compiled information out there and if put to use correctly, it can help any agency run their business efficiently, achieve their operational goals and fuel growth and profitability.

UTILIZE KEY METRICS TO DO MORE FOR CLIENTS, STAFF, AND YOUR BUSINESS

SAMPLE METRICS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES AND SATISFACTION

- ▶ **New Client Status:** How long do new clients tend to move from status to status on the back end? These data points reveal the intake journey—the first step in client satisfaction.
- ▶ **Client Feedback:** There are several options here to track positive and negative reports, with precipitating causes, to learn what's going right and what needs to be tweaked. These are great tools to ensure agencies are responding to client needs over time.
- ▶ **First and Subsequent Visits:** Review how many new clients' first visits occurred in one month and, for each, when the next visit occurred. This helps assess client conversion and spot gaps in timely care.
- ▶ **On-Time Visits:** The value of this metric needs no introduction. Patterns of late visits bear big consequences in client satisfaction.
- ▶ **Hospitalizations/Worsening Outcomes:** With value-based purchasing, agencies must demonstrate strong client outcomes, and the proof is in the reports at both high and personalized levels.
- ▶ **Continuity of Care:** To forge client-caregiver chemistry, this report helps agencies take a holistic look at a client's caregivers and set benchmarks for acceptable matchups.
- ▶ **Care Plan Adherence:** Keep tabs on task completion and ensure caregivers are consistently following visit requirements and performing necessary ADLs. Also, track if clients' weekly care plan goals are being met and long-term goals are on track.

SAMPLE METRICS FOR OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

- ▶ **Scheduler Utilization:** Track average hours for these team members to help prevent burnout and shift responsibilities accordingly.
- ▶ **Service Hours:** Measure by day, month, or custom period for payor purposes, as well as see how PSWs, nurses, and other care workers are performing over time.
- ▶ **Time per Visit:** This data point reveals efficiency if an agency creates a KPI and tracks variances on it over time.
- ▶ **Caregiver Capacity:** Work against burnout by tracking each valued members' capacity and see who might need greater support.
- ▶ **Caregiver Satisfaction:** AI algorithms can generate satisfaction scores that pinpoint root causes of caregiver churn or attrition based on factors such as quality shifts, scheduled hours and recurring shifts. Agencies can pinpoint unhappy caregivers, identify trends and act.
- ▶ **Shift Offer Reports:** Track the rates of acceptance/rejection by caregiver when it comes to the shifts they choose to take or leave. Identify caregivers who may be unmotivated or overworked.
- ▶ **At the Margins:** Margin reports can provide insight into caregiver mileage and overtime hours, or offer a window into every visit in a given timeframe. This provides a close up view on how much client visits in an area are costing at the margins of spreadsheets.

2021 Caregiver of the Year

Nominee **Greg Gorton's** warmth, integrity and dependability recognized nationally

Record-Setting Number of Nominations

At a time when good caregivers are hard to find, HCAOA members paused to recognize the passion, commitment, empathy and hard work of their employees. They shared the best of the best with us in competition for this award recognizing the top home caregiver in the United States for 2021.

A record-breaking 250 nominations were received from more than 40 states for this year's Caregiver of the Year award.

Members, thank you for taking time to see the good work being done by your staff and affirm it.

Caregivers, thank you for giving, listening, growing and caring as you bring home care to seniors and people with disabilities.

Congratulations to all of our nominees and to our finalist and our Caregiver of the Year for 2021—Greg Gorton!



Greg Gorton's friendly, easygoing personality coupled with a positive outlook on life and the unshakable presence of a former stage musician make him an interesting conversationalist. His compassion, years of training, love for other people and passion for his work make him an excellent caregiver.

"People just respond well to me," Greg shared. "I don't know if I chose caregiving or if it chose me. It's definitely a calling. I started by taking nurse aide classes in 2005 and afterward, I was hired at Right at Home [Grand Blanc]. I've been there ever since."

Scott Hill, President of Right at Home, Grand Blanc, validated that Greg embodies their company's mission to improve the quality of life of those they serve.

"Greg will tell you that the purpose of his life, and the reason he is working with Right at Home, is to utilize his skills and talents to help spread the love of God around this crazy world," Scott said. "Sometimes this world can be tough, and many people find themselves in very difficult situations requiring help; this is exactly where Greg can have a positive impact on the lives of our clients, and he does this every time walks into their home."

These qualities and glowing reviews of his work made Greg's nomination shine among nearly 250 nominees from more than 40 states, noted HCAOA Executive Director Vicki Hoak.

"Greg Gorton and the other nominees for this national caregiver award epitomize the quality care that can be provided in people's own homes, enabling them to live as independently as possible," she shared. "This is not an easy job, but they approach it with compassion, grace and dedication to the clients they serve. We owe [these caregivers] a debt of gratitude."

"I'm right where I need to be to do what I am supposed to be doing."

For the past 17 years, Greg Gorton has faithfully served clients in the Grand Blanc area. He claims he is always "sent to the nicest people's homes."

Though there have been hard times, like when his father passed away and now caring for his aging mother, Greg has chosen to remain a professional caregiver because he enjoys the work and believes it is valuable.

"Greg goes into homes and can create a bond with our clients and their families that puts them all at ease, fostering an atmosphere to provide exceptional care almost effortlessly," explained Greg's nominator, Erica Riley.

Erica recalled a special instance that embodies Greg's commitment to service, "I sent Greg to a family who was apprehensive about receiving in home care from a stranger. The client was bed-bound and in hospice. His wife was very overwhelmed."

"I knew exactly who to call. Greg, being the caregiver that he is, took along his musical instruments, including a ukulele so that he could play blue grass music at the client's bedside," Erica recalled. "Unbeknownst to any of us, the client was a HUGE bluegrass fan. Greg worked just one shift with that client. He passed while Greg was playing bluegrass music by his bedside, leaving an impact that the family will never forget."

Personifying an Ideal Caregiver

"Greg personifies the qualities and characteristics of an ideal caregiver, which is why this recognition is so fitting. [We] are honored and proud to have Greg represent our brand," stated Right at Home CEO Brian Petranick, a member of the HCAOA Board of Directors. "Greg truly represents the best of the best."

"He is honest, has integrity and is as dependable as the day is long," said Erica.

Scott Hill commented, "Every client that Greg serves has exceptional things to say about him and the service we provide through Greg."

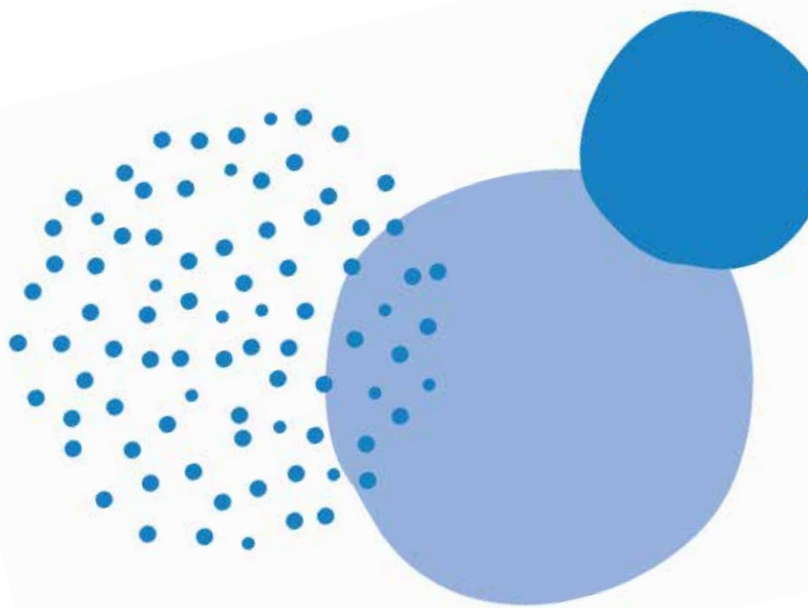
When asked what equipped him to become a good caregiver, Greg credits his family—growing up in a wonderful home and witnessing his parents' love for each other and for their family.

Looking for caregivers like Greg? He advises seeking out people who are problem-solvers, think outside-the-box and make things fun. Being a good listener, humble and a people person are also important, he noted.

Encouraging Other Caregivers

While Greg loves his job, he acknowledged there are areas for improvement, specifically in the workforce, as home health needs are growing, and also in compensation for services.

Despite these challenges, Greg encouraged other caregivers to try to make it fun. "Make your words positive and deliver them with a smile. It's a calling," he explained. "Talk to your clients, then listen. Bring clients and their families peace of mind knowing that things are taken care of and they are safe."



2022 Caregiver of the Year Nominations

The Home Care Association of America looks forward to recognizing the excellent work of our members' caregiving staff each year with this award.

Stay tuned for information on how to nominate someone for the Caregiver of the Year Award in 2022!

IN THEIR Own Words...

Caregiver of the Year 2021 Finalists

The Home Care Association of America received more than 250 nominations for Caregiver of the Year from more than 40 states this year – a record-breaking number!

Narrowing these nominations is difficult every year, but this year we were really impressed by the quality of nominations. The selection committee chose 10 finalists for Caregiver of the Year 2021 and called a few of them to ask what they love about the profession.

Our list of finalists and their comments are to follow, in their own words.



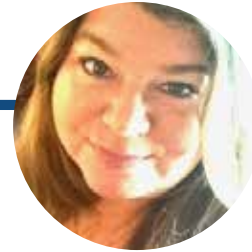
Amua Adu
HomeCare of the Rockies
Longmont, CO



Renate Jefferson
Senior Home Help
Camden, DE



Wilma Reed
Right at Home
Winston-Salem, NC



I love where I work. Everyone here feels like my own family. I don't have to worry about [job] stress. I go into my job and it's like another home. Everyone is different, but I'm learning from the clients. I'm learning to accept their love and it is so rewarding. I make such special connections with my clients. I love being at [Loves Family Home Care]!

-Natalie Toledo
Loves Family Home Care
Fort Myers, FL



The girls in the office just work so well with me and are so pleasant. My boss, the owner—I just love them! They're great and I know I can call them any time I have an issue, which is hardly ever. I feel comfortable and happy working for them. I've worked for them for 15 years!"

-Deanna Conroy
Home Helpers Home Care
Hinsdale, IL



There is a lot chaos in the world and the country right now, but I knew with this [job] that I had the opportunity to bring good and love into the world. This world isn't easy, but we get to go into other people's homes and help them."

-Greg Gorton
Right at Home
Grand Blanc, MI



I am there to help [my clients], but I'm also there as a support system for the families, if necessary. I feel that [providing the family with support] is just as important as being able to help the clients themselves."

-Adrienne Cooper
All About Your Home Health
Easthampton, MA



We are here [during a difficult time in our country] and [support is] what we need. We need more resources so that there is no one left behind. It's nice when you can generate an interest [in something like home care] and it builds momentum, because it is hard with the workforce the way it is, the children at home, the parents at home, the people who have disabilities. The good thing I see is that we are getting back to being concerned about one another. Helping one another, caring about one another. I want to keep that going."

-Zora Bullett
Bry & Wms Medical, Inc.
Harrisburg, PA



When you are a good caregiver, whoever you touch, you leave your fingerprints."

-Daina Muzirwa
Caring Friends Home Care
Conshohocken, PA



Every time I see the passion of the owner of my company, a retired nurse, I am encouraged. She is my mentor. Her patience with me to learn all I need to know is a gift."

-Paolo Moyani
Companion Extraordinaire
Henrico, VA



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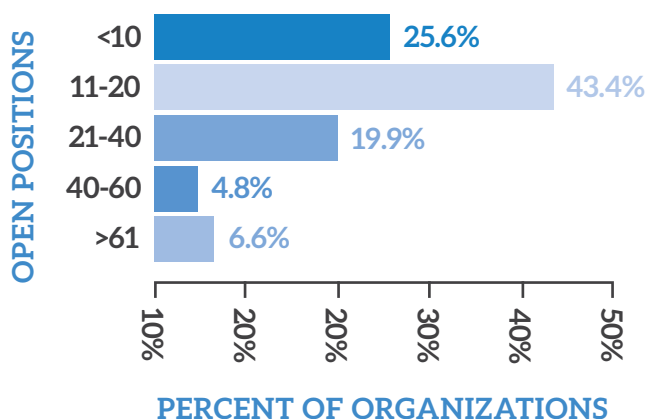
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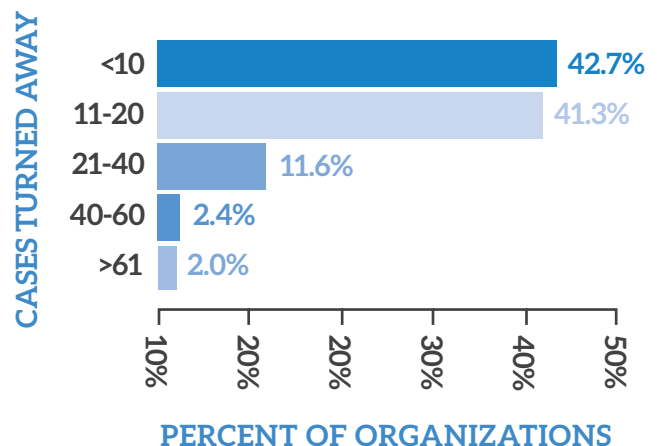
Difficulty finding and retaining quality staff challenges all businesses, but especially home care agencies. It is a recurring concern the Home Care Association of America hears about from our members.

The data-driven tips and tools in the following articles can help home care agencies tweak processes to best recruit, engage and hire high-quality future employees.

How many caregiver positions does your organization have open right now - meaning if there were caregivers available, you would hire them today?



On average, how many clients or cases per month have you had to turn away because you do not have the staff needed to cover the work?





Courting Candidates: How Hiring Processes Make or Break the Deal

Seeking qualified applicants for your positions?
The data shows your hiring process matters.



As small business owners face a post-pandemic shortage of applicants to their open roles, it is more important than ever to focus on creating a great candidate experience to attract talent. Candidate experience can be defined as the experience a candidate has with a potential employer throughout the hiring process—from job posting to job offer.

“Candidate experience can be defined as the experience a candidate has with a potential employer throughout the hiring process—from job posting to job offer.”

CareerPlug surveyed 500 job seekers who have applied for jobs within the last year and analyzed the answers about their experience during the hiring process to answer one basic question: Does candidate experience actually matter?

The bottom line is **yes**.

The experience a candidate has with a company’s hiring process ultimately impacts a candidate’s decision to accept or decline a job offer.

Outcomes of a Negative Experience in the Hiring Process

Survey results found that 42% of job seekers in the health care industry have had at least one negative experience in the hiring process in the past 12 months. Nearly half (44%) of health care job seekers declined a job offer due to a poor experience.

“Nearly half (44%) of health care job seekers declined a job offer due to a poor [hiring] experience.”

A negative hiring process or poor candidate experience is extremely costly for home health agencies.

Consider all the hours spent on hiring and recruiting. When a great applicant is found and an offer is made, to have nearly half of your offers declined due to a poor experience somewhere in the process does not make good business sense. No employer wants to settle for the second or third choice for a role when simple changes could have won the first-choice candidate.

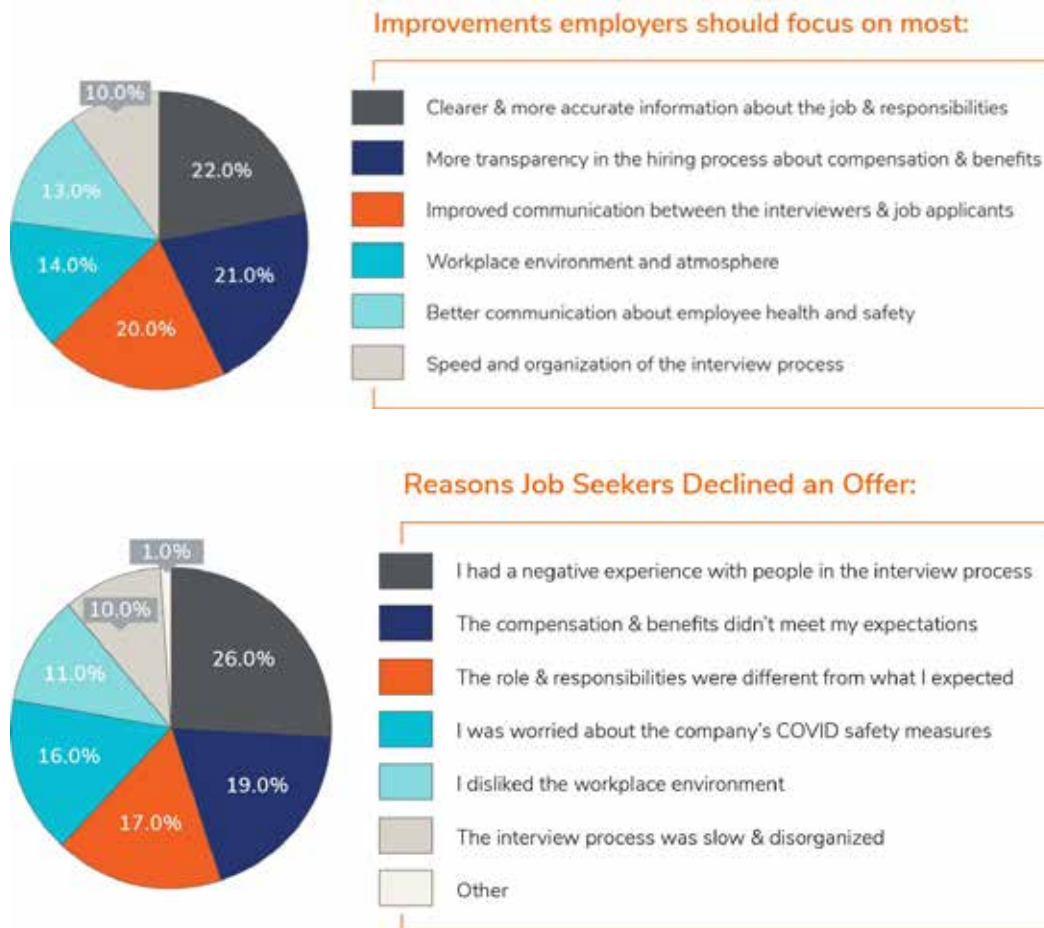


ABOUT CAREERPLUG:

Since 2007, CareerPlug has worked to make hiring easier for over 14,000 growing companies in the US and Canada with hiring software for non-HR people, so every owner, operator and hiring manager can make the right hires for their team.

What Causes a Negative Candidate Experience?

When we looked at the reasons job seekers classified those experiences as being negative, here's what we found:



The number one reason candidates turned down job offers was a negative experience with people in the interview process. These respondents mentioned interviewers who were rude or distracted during the interview. These experiences gave candidates a negative impression of the company as a whole.

Positive Experiences Are Powerful

The majority of people surveyed are currently working at companies where they had a positive candidate experience during the hiring process. 80% of job seekers report that a positive hiring process influenced their decision to accept the offer.

"80% of job seekers report that a positive hiring process influenced their decision to accept [a job] offer."

Applicant Experiences Affect Employer Brands Too

The impact of poor candidate experience extends beyond the disappointment of a rejected job offer—it has serious implications for your employer brand and your business' reputation as a great place to work.

- 33% of candidates said they have left a negative review online after having a negative hiring process experience.
- 69% of health care candidates said they have left a positive review online after having a positive hiring process experience.

This is significant because more than half of job seekers abandon their pursuit of a company after reading negative reviews.

Don't miss out on the best candidates by letting negative candidate reviews impact your employer brand.

Candidates Pay Close Attention to Hiring Processes

In the CareerPlug survey, job seekers were asked to rate the importance of the hiring process.

The overwhelming majority of respondents rated the hiring process' importance very high—between 8 and 10 out of 10—indicating that most candidates pay close attention to how a company carries out its hiring process.

Additionally, 47% of health care job seekers said they care more about the hiring process experience now than they did before the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the glut of available jobs on the market, applicants have their pick of positions. Remember, just like organizations scrutinize job seekers and their resumes, job seekers can now afford to be picky.

Factors That Influence a Candidate's Decision to Accept an Offer

Respondents ranked the importance of six factors that impacted their decision to consider an offer in the CareerPlug survey.

1

Hiring Process Transparency

64% of health care job seekers rated hiring process transparency as a very important factor influencing their decision to join a company.

2

Atmosphere of the Workplace

This factor ranked "very important" by 60% of respondents. If employees in your home care agency enjoy their work, feel valued and are not overburdened or burned out, it will show and attract new talent to your business.

3

Interviewer Experience

Who you have interviewing candidates and their methodology matters: 53% of survey responses indicated this mattered in the final decision to accept or decline an offer.

4

Responsiveness in the Hiring Process

47% of health care job seekers rated responsiveness after applying and responsiveness later in the hiring process as important. Remember, it is a job seeker's market. Just like dating, responsiveness indicates interest and the importance of an applicant. When candidates are being courted by multiple employers, home care agencies must respond promptly.

5

Appearance of the Workplace

To effectively woo job seekers, home care agencies must provide a positive impression. Candidates will evaluate the place that will be their work "home." Is your office welcoming and tidy? This factor mattered significantly to nearly half of survey respondents.

6

Remote Technology Experience

The only factor that received less than 40% of "very important" votes (37%) was remote technology experience (i.e., the ease of joining a video interview, video quality, etc.). Even though this factor may not matter as much to job seekers, remote technology in home health care is on the upswing. Position your agency for success with technology upgrades, useful software and thorough employee training to remain on the forefront of care and provide the best treatment for your clients.

Bottom line: job seekers take into consideration all aspects of a hiring process when making their decision to accept an offer.

How to Improve the Candidate Experience

When job seekers were asked to identify what employers could do to improve the hiring process that would have the most impact on candidate experience, here is what they said:

1. Provide Clearer, More Accurate Information about the Job and Responsibilities

Take the time to ensure that your job posting is thorough and accurately reflects the responsibilities of the role. Candidates look to your job posting as their guide when envisioning working for your home care agency. If they find out later that the job description is not accurate, they will feel like their time was wasted.

2. Create More Transparency in the Hiring Process about Compensation and Benefits

Job seekers want to know more details about a role earlier in the hiring process so they can make informed decisions. For example, 39% of respondents expect to be informed about compensation in the initial job post. This is a huge—and easy—opportunity for employers to improve candidate experience, while also creating a win for their applicant screening process, as job seekers will self-select in or out early in the process.

3. Improve Communication between the Interviewers and Job Applicants

Applicants consider prompt and frequent communication with their potential employer to be a major positive factor in the candidate experience. It's important to keep this in mind throughout the hiring process with all candidates, not just those that move ahead.

Tips to Improve Communication with Candidates

- **Respond to all applicants immediately after they apply.** You can automate this by creating email templates, selecting auto-responses in the job posting sites that offer them, implementing text recruiting to quickly invite qualified candidates to schedule interviews right away, or rejecting candidates who don't check all your boxes.
- **Communicate the hiring process steps and timeline upfront.** Give them a sense of what to expect during initial phone screens, in the job posting or on your careers page.
- **Keep candidates updated on their status in your hiring process.** If a candidate reaches out to you for an update, that's a sign you need to be better about communicating. Remember that candidates are often pursuing multiple job opportunities at once and you could miss out on your favorite candidates by keeping them in the dark.

Remember: Regardless of the state of the job market, the best candidates will always have the ability to be picky about where they want to work. If you understand what candidates want out of a hiring process, you can put your business at a significant advantage in any job market.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[CareerPlug's 2021 Candidate Experience Report](#)

[Attract High Quality Candidates](#)

[Findings from CareerPlug's Candidate Experience Survey](#)

[Why Bad Employer Reviews Online Matter](#)

[CareerPlug's job posting software](#)

[CareerPlug's applicant screening software](#)

[CareerPlug's text recruiting software](#)

The Top Five Home Care Agency Recruitment Sources

..... WHERE TO ATTRACT MORE CANDIDATES AND HOW



**By Megan Kujawa ,
Content Marketing Specialist,
Home Care Pulse**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Megan is a Content Marketing Specialist at Home Care Pulse with experience in digital and traditional marketing methods. Before working at Home Care Pulse, she assisted nonprofits and startups secure funding and develop operations. Megan is passionate about helping small businesses grow from the ground up, while utilizing all digital and social channels.

Home Care Pulse provides experience management (surveys), caregiver/clinician training and online reputation management to home care agencies and other post-acute care providers.



If your home care organization has struggled to find employees over the last year, you are not alone. The United States is facing a major labor shortage right now, and in an industry that was already striving hard to find new caregivers, home care is getting hit especially hard—so hard that 95.5% of agencies reported caregiver shortages having a negative impact on their business in 2020.

**95.5% of agencies
reported
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business in 2020.**

Even though demand for home care services is higher than ever, a lot of agencies have seen a significant gap between the number of incoming cases and the number of staff available to handle them.

It's always great to see more people starting to recognize the value of home care and aging in place. However, without enough staff to enter homes, admissions are being denied, schedules are inconsistent and multiple caregivers are having to staff cases.

According to projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in a span of only 10 years, it's estimated that there will be 7.8 million direct care openings—6.4 million of which can be attributed to the labor shortage.

While there's no simple fix to the problem, there are things you can do to make sure that you're hiring caregivers to meet the rising demand as best as you can.

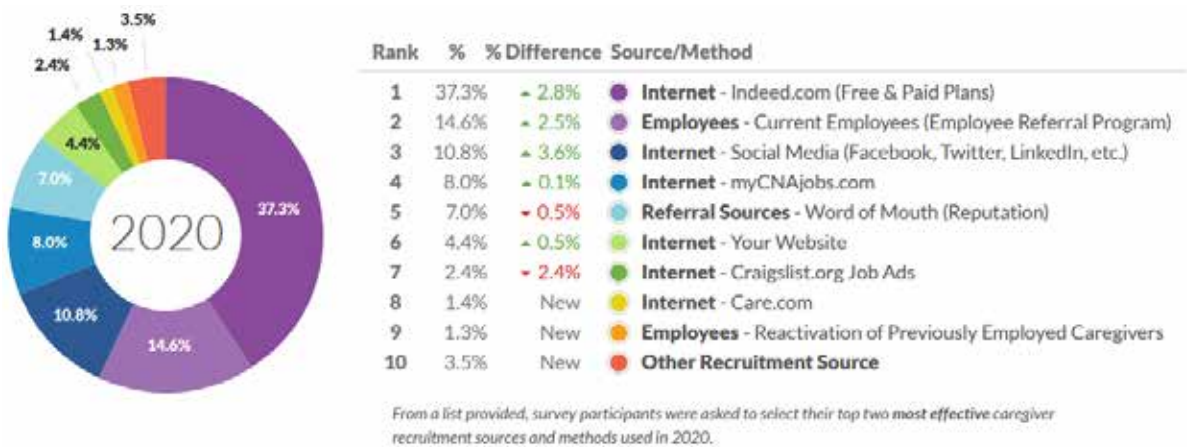


Reconsider Where You Look for Candidates

As part of Home Care Pulse’s 2021 Home Care Benchmarking Study, more than 800 home care agencies shared which recruitment sources they are using most frequently. Here are the top five along with their turnover rate and acquisition cost.

1. **Indeed.com:** Turnover – 76.1%, Acquisition Cost – \$497
2. **Current Employees:** Turnover – 63.8%, Acquisition Cost – \$661
3. **Social Media:** Turnover – 72.8%, Acquisition Cost – \$477
4. **MyCNAjobs.com:** Turnover – 75.3%, Acquisition Cost – \$662
5. **Word of mouth:** Turnover – 47.1%, Acquisition Cost – \$347

Top 10 Recruitment Sources—2021



Other Places to Find Candidates

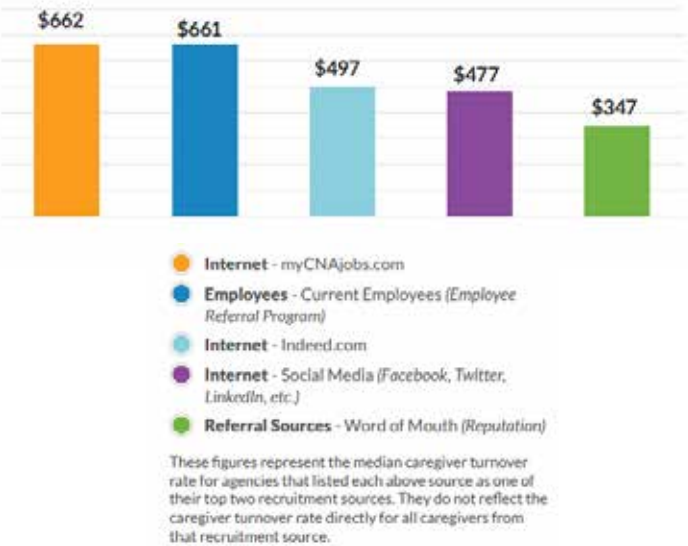
Besides the top five recruitment sources that other home care agencies use, there are hundreds of other places where you could find candidates, depending on how your local market responds.

Other responding agencies have found success using:

- Their agency’s website
- Craigslist.org job ads
- Care.com
- Corporate TV ads
- Reactivation of previously employed caregivers
- Texting programs
- Local schools
- CareerPlug
- Hireology
- Recruitment agencies

Balancing Turnover and Cost-to-Hire

To determine which sources are the most beneficial for your home care agency, it's important that you constantly keep tabs on your metrics and data. Your turnover and acquisition costs could be drastically different from the industry averages, causing a particular source to be more or less beneficial for your agency.



There is always a possibility that a recruitment source like local schools or vocational programs may be your main source of new applicants. Your untraditional recruitment source may also have a significantly lower turnover rate and acquisition cost than the rest. Even if this source is not as popular for the industry as a whole, do not dismiss it simply because it is not an industry norm. Instead, recognize that your home care agency's data knows best.

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Recognize that your home care agency's data knows best.

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It is also critical to evaluate the short and long-term needs of your company. While posting a job ad on an employment website or social media might get you a quick and cost-friendly hire, it may not be the best bang for your buck if employees from that site turnover quickly. Although you might be saving time and money in the short term, it's going

to have the exact opposite effect in the long-term—especially when the average cost to replace a single caregiver is about \$2,600 according to data from the Center for American Progress and the Home Care Benchmarking Study.

Hiring is a strategic process. Sometimes the quickest or most pain-free method will not always give you the results you are seeking. Though it may be simple initially, it may end up costing your team time and money over months and years.

Recruitment Cannot Be Done in a Vacuum

While choosing the right recruitment sources is important for any agency, it is even more important to remember that recruitment cannot be done in a vacuum.

Various factors can affect the outcome of your recruitment efforts. The more aware you are of influencing factors as a whole, the more likely you are to rise above the caregiver shortage crisis.

Overall, this comes down to one simple idea: build a reputation that makes caregivers come to you. This is more commonly known as an employer brand or employment brand.

Establishing an employment brand is one of the best ways to combat caregiver shortages. An excellent employment brand shapes how potential employees view your business, boosts employee word of mouth advertising, grows your reputation with employees and in the community and more. An excellent employment brand can be a key influencer in prospective employees' decision-making process.

Market Your Agency to Potential Employees and Live Your Brand

It's common to talk about marketing as a tool to build a brand and attract new clients. Is recruitment really all that different? No, it is not. Approach recruitment like you are marketing to new clients.

Listen closely to both employee and candidate feedback and evaluate whether your agency is living out your employment brand. If your agency is successfully embracing your employment brand and responding to feedback, then encourage your employees and clients to tell others about your services. Word of mouth advertising is the lowest acquisition cost of all the recruitment sources discussed, but its success is contingent on the quality of your organization and reputation—how well you live up to your brand.

When your home care agency analyzes your recruitment data, employee and client feedback and builds a positive employment brand, you will have greater success hiring and retaining quality employees.

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Additional Resources:

- [Staffing shortage could lead to 7.8 million open positions](#) – Home Health Care News
- [Significant business costs to replacing employees](#) - Center for American Progress
- [What is an employment brand and why should you care?](#) – Home Care Pulse



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Advocacy at Work - *Changing Perspectives, Fostering Understanding*



By 2050, the Medicare population will double, placing significant pressure on our existing Medicare and Medicaid structure.

The decisions our legislators make now will set the course for elder care in the future. This makes the importance of advocacy for our industry right now both essential and valuable.

To effectively advocate for our members, the Home Care Association of America sent out a survey and many of you responded. Not surprisingly, workforce shortage was the number one challenge, with others noted—including low Medicaid reimbursement and burdensome regulations affecting businesses. We took this information and immediately began analyzing it to inform our organizational priorities and strategies.

Learn from our HCAOA leadership how advocating for home and community-based services (HCBS) is changing and the gradual shifts they see happening on Capitol Hill.

Capitol Hill Perspectives on Home Care Today

About the Interviewees



Vicki Hoak
Executive Director
Home Care Association
of America (HCAOA)

Vicki has more than 30 years of experience in association management, state government and marketing. Prior to the HCAOA, she served for nearly 20 years as the CEO of the Pennsylvania Home Care Association. During that time, she served on two gubernatorial task forces on senior care, was chair and vice-chair of the Council of State Home Care Associations and State Forum for the National Association of Home Care and Hospice, chaired the Long Term Care Committee and was a member of Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance Advisory Committee. Led by Vicki for the second year, the HCAOA advocates for the interests of home care organizations and the people they serve—including supporting the Credit for Caring Act, strengthening state advocacy, partnering with state home care associations, improving state regulatory issues and elevating the role of home care aides.



Patrick Cooney
President,
The Federal Group, Inc.,
Lobbyist, HCAOA

Patrick Cooney established The Federal Group, Inc. in 1999 with the objective of providing affordable, high-quality government relations consulting services to companies, associations, municipalities and nonprofit organizations. Prior to starting the firm, Patrick lobbied on behalf of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS). He also served as a Legislative Assistant to Congressman Dick Swett (D-NH) from 1991 to 1995 and as the State Field Director on the 1990 reelection campaign of the late Senator Jim Exon (D-NE). Patrick has an expansive knowledge of the legislative, regulatory and political processes in Washington. He frequently speaks on government relations matters, particularly in the area of health care policy. The Federal Group, Inc. represents the Home Care Association of America and our members on Capitol Hill.

What is the greatest challenge facing home care agencies today?

VH "Workforce. We do not have enough supply to meet demand. In HCAOA's recent survey of members, we asked how many open positions agencies had available. More than 40 percent of respondents shared they have between 11 and 20 positions open. Twenty percent said they had between 21 to 40 open positions. Eleven percent shared they had more than 40 open positions. This is staggering.

I spoke with a member agency in Pennsylvania the other day. The workforce shortage has resulted in that agency turning away ninety cases a month. We have dealt with a workforce shortage for decades, but it is more acute now, because more people want home care due to the pandemic. "

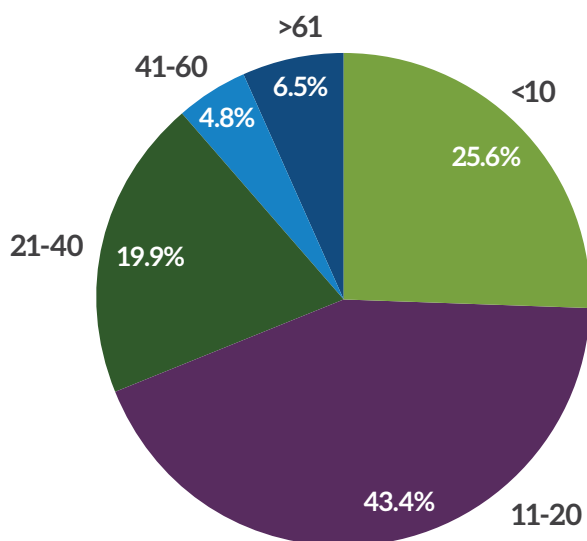
PC "The principal challenge facing home care agencies is workforce. We hear from members on a daily basis because they are having trouble recruiting and retaining workers.

[The workforce] is a multi-faceted issue. We have an aging population, with many workers retiring and diminishing the workforce. Additionally, workers have an abundance of job opportunities, and over the pandemic, many have enjoyed opportunities to work at home, in other industries, and some workers have seen real wage competition for their services. It is a real challenge to staff agencies at this time.

There are plenty of customers seeking home care services. We just need the workforce to care for them."

From the HCAOA Workforce Survey

Q: How many caregiver positions do you have open right now?



“We are currently struggling to staff over 600 hours/week of care for new and existing clients.”

“We have an extreme shortage of caregivers and can't find nearly enough wanting to work. We are turning away 90 to 95% of prospective clients due to staff shortages.”

“We are losing over 1,000 hours of business a month!”

How is the Home Care Association of America working to address this shortage for members?

PC "In response, the HCAOA is working on two fronts—one to ensure that there are enough domestically prepared workers to meet the needs of our home care agencies.

The other is to investigate ways to bring in more people—specifically more foreign workers through visa programs—who can meet the needs of our seniors and community. We feel immigration needs to take a bigger role."

VH "Recently, HCAOA joined with the National Association for Home Care & Hospice and the Partnership for Medicaid Home-based Care to create the Home Care Action Alliance. The goal of this partnership is to explore different ways to recruit and retain caregivers."

Home care does not always receive the same recognition as home health or hospice. How are you working with legislators to change their perspective on home care?

VH

"We are working on the national and state-wide levels to develop relationships with policymakers and through those relationships, we hope to educate legislators about the three different sectors of home-based care."

"Many kinds of care are paid for by Medicaid or Medicare, but the majority of our members are providing in-home care that is paid for privately. While Medicaid has significantly increased its funding for home care, frequently the rules around eligibility are strict and outdated. For example, receiving Medicaid-funded home care is still considered an exception to the rule and states must apply for a waiver to offer this care, while nursing home care is an entitlement.

So, the answer truly is education. We are constantly educating about what home care can do, its cost effectiveness, its benefits and, of course, its preference by most everyone."

PC

"I do not see this as an issue of respect or recognition, but instead confusion about various terms in long-term care. There is some familiarity with home health services via Medicare through post-hospitalization care.

And, more and more, as legislators on Capitol Hill deal with parents who need assistance around the house, legislators are becoming more aware and are growing more familiar with the type of care our members provide, which is continuous personal care in the home. The familiarity with home care and HCAOA members has really grown dramatically over the years. Lawmakers are beginning to see our agency members as essential to our long-term services and support system.

Part of our focus is to educate about the difference between home care and home health. It can be confusing. We seek out every opportunity to educate legislators on what home care is and the benefits it provides."

What are the HCAOA's lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill focusing on currently?

VH

"Currently, we are watching the Build Back Better Act. While it initially [the Build Back Better Act] contained a significant expansion of home care, it has now been reduced to \$150 trillion, which was in the House version that passed. It's now in the Senate for their consideration.

We are also focusing on the [tax] credit for family caregivers. Sadly, it was removed from the BBB Act, but we are still advocating to put it back in the plan and will now turn our attention to the Senate. We are working with AARP and several other senior groups to advocate on behalf of our families.

If families are doing the right thing by keeping their loved one where they want to be—at home—then they should be recognized. A two-thousand-dollar tax credit would be a nice thank-you to these families.

We have tax credits for all kinds of things, like child care, which is extremely important to our home care aides, but then there is a tax credit for buying an electric car. I think caring for a loved one at home deserves the same kind of incentive.

There are about 8 million people just above the Medicaid income eligibility line, who are paying for home care. These families should receive a break for doing the right thing. Otherwise, when a family becomes overwhelmed with caregiving they are forced to look at other options, such as a nursing home, which is far more expensive and usually, in a short time, the person's assets are exhausted and Medicaid ends up paying the bill."

“

"Families should receive a break for doing the right thing by keeping their loved one where they want to be at home."

—Vicki Hoak

PC

"At the time of this interview, the Build Back Better plan just passed the House of Representatives and within that is a provision expanding home health care, which is important to the HCAOA and our members.

We believe the rates provided by Medicaid need a boost to care for our aging population. More of our members would be interested and able to provide care to the Medicaid population if their payment rates were commensurate with the cost of providing care."

Does the tide of support for HCBS seem to be changing on Capitol Hill? How so?

PC

"Yes, absolutely. There is growing awareness of the importance of home care, particularly as legislators become aware of the aging challenges of the general public.

The US population will age significantly in the next 30 years. By the year 2050, The Medicare population will double, growing from 40 million people to 80 million people and putting significant pressure on Medicare and Medicaid.

Legislators are looking to reduce long-term care costs, but still provide high-quality care for seniors. We believe home care is the answer.

“

“We believe home care is the answer.”

—Patrick Cooney

How could the Choose Home Care Act impact home care agencies?

PC

"The HCAOA is supportive of the Choose Home Care Act (sponsored by Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, and Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan). Their bills create a new extended home health benefit under Medicare.

Today, someone might be required to move from the hospital to skilled nursing, but this legislation would expand opportunities for patients to return to their homes to recuperate and extend the care for 30 days, which includes 360 hours of personal care.

This is significant because under Medicare today, personal care services are not a covered benefit. The exception is Medicare Advantage plans, where home care is permitted under the supplemental services offered by Medicare-managed care plans.

Home health is covered, but home care (personal care) is not. This [legislation] would expand services and many home health agencies have indicated that they would contract with a home care agency to provide the personal care hours.

The Choose Home Care Act would support a number of services including home-delivered meals and nutrition support, respite care, personal care services and more medical services. Also, under the bill, home health agencies would be required to obtain an additional credential to provide this extended care option.

While home care providers are not home health, we foresee that home health will not be able to meet the demand for the number of personal care hours, without the support of home care and will likely contract out with them.

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What should home care agencies do to support the HCAOA's work with legislators?

VH

"Our members need to connect with their legislators and talk with them about what their agency does for the community, specifically, their legislators' constituents. Invite their legislator to come with their caregiver on a home visit. Seeing first-hand how much home care means to their constituents usually solidifies the lawmaker's support of our industry.

Also, get engaged with what issues the HCAOA is working on through our website and alerts—both locally and statewide."

PC

"We are most effective as an industry when we are united. I encourage all members to become active in responding to our legislative alerts and, of course, we are always here to help members develop meaningful relationships with their elected officials."



Connect with your legislators quickly and easily by accessing the [HCAOA Legislative Action Center](https://www.achc.org/legislative-action-center) on the HCAOA website. Here members, caregivers, clients and families can send a message that is already composed to their respective legislator. In just "one click" the message is sent! These helpful forms draw legislators' attention to important home care issues.

→ [achc.org](https://www.achc.org)

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