

Call to Care NH: The Direct Care Workforce in the Time of COVID

Laura Davie, NH Alliance for Healthy Aging

Heather Grow, Ascentria Care Alliance

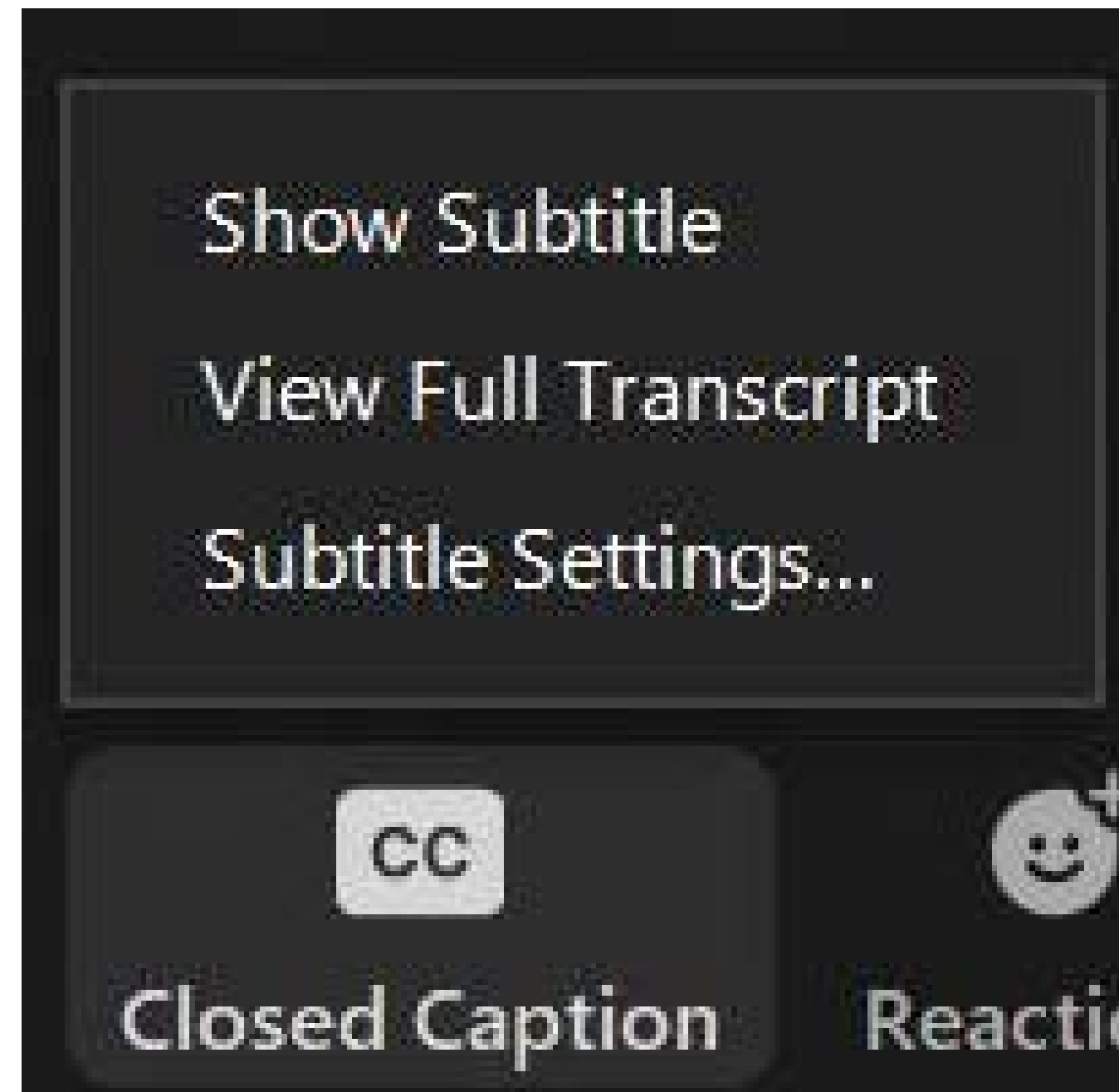
Amy Moore, Ascentria Care Alliance

Nancy Rollins, Easter Seals

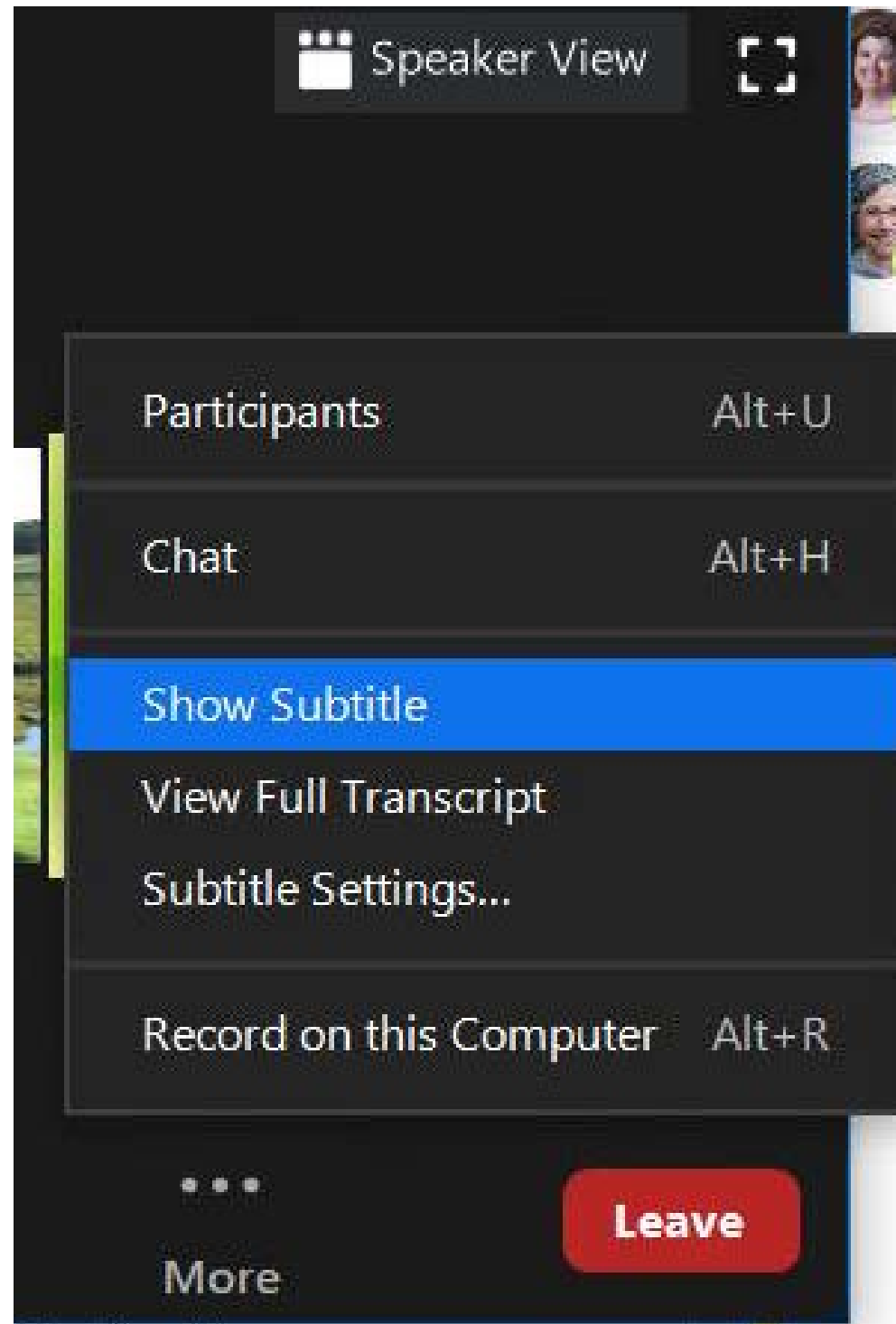


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Enabling Closed Captioning



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*A Shared
Vision for
Our Future*



AHA Strategic Priority Area: Workforce

Overarching Goal:

Improve the availability of quality healthcare and social service workforces

Strategy 1:

Improve direct care worker job quality and increase numbers to meet the demand

Strategy 2:

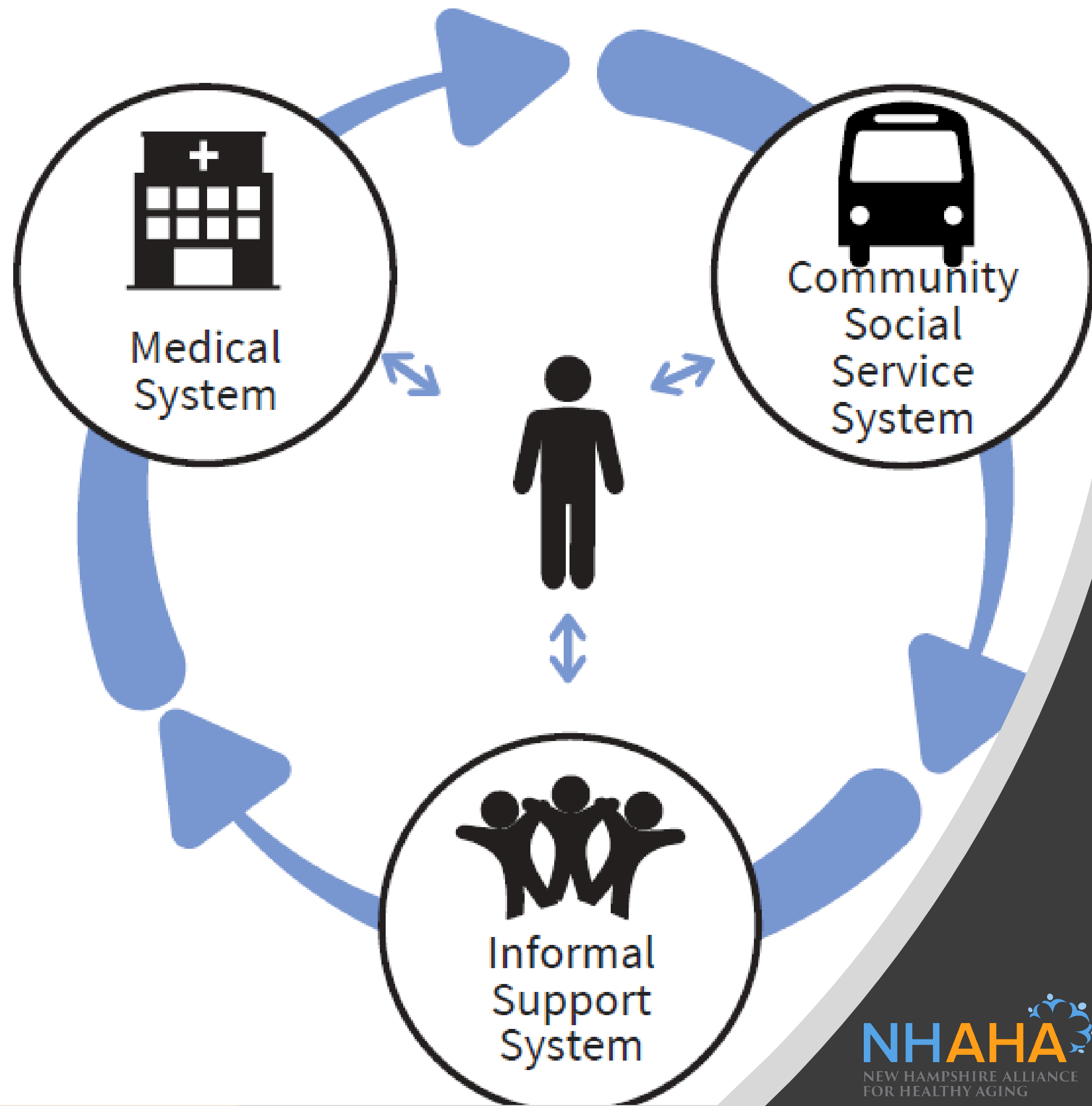
Provide education and awareness of the need for direct care workers

Who are Direct Care Workers?

Provide hands-on assistance such as: light housekeeping, medication management, and personal care

Examples of titles: home health aides, dental hygienists, community health workers, and licensed nursing assistants

Work in places like: The home, nursing facility, hospitals, and other residential facilities



Positive Sum Game

Presenters



**Heather Grow,
Ascentria Care Alliance**

Heather has worked at Ascentria Care Alliance in the In-Home Care division for over 12 years. She is passionate about her work and has served over 20 different clients. She loves helping and caring for others.



**Amy Moore,
Ascentria Care Alliance**

Amy has been at Ascentria In-Home Care since 2008, working as the Director for the past 5 years. She serves on the steering committee for the AHA Advocacy work group and is currently a board member for the Home Care, Hospice & Palliative Care Alliance of NH.



**Nancy Rollins,
Easterseals**

Nancy joined Easterseals NH, VT, ME and Farnum Center in 2016 with over 45 years' experience working with children, adults, families and seniors who have disabilities or special needs. Previously, Nancy was Associate Commission at the NH Department of Health and Human Services.



Segment 1:

Direct Care Worker Perspective



Heather Grow

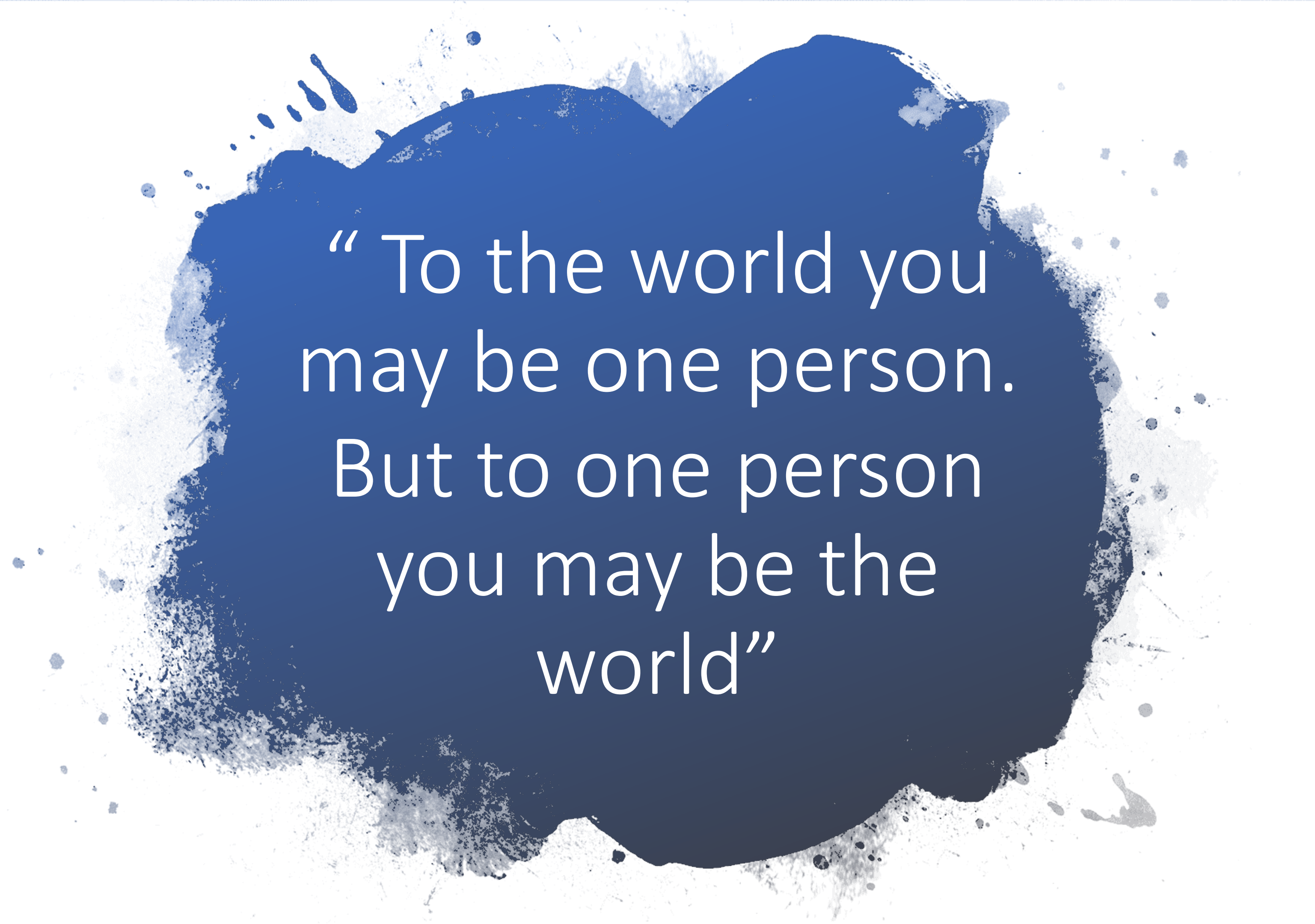
Personal Care Service Provider,
Ascentria Care Alliance

Caregiver Moment #17

That embarrassing moment when you almost run to help an elderly stranger use a public toilet.

Because...its habit, ya know?

[read more at eldercareissues.blogspot.com](http://eldercareissues.blogspot.com)



“To the world you
may be one person.
But to one person
you may be the
world”



Segment 2:

Challenges of Paying a Livable
Wage to Direct Care Workers



Amy Moore

Director, Ascentria Care Alliance

Direct Care Workers: National Data

2 in 5
direct care
workers require
some form of
public assistance

86%
of direct care
workers are
women

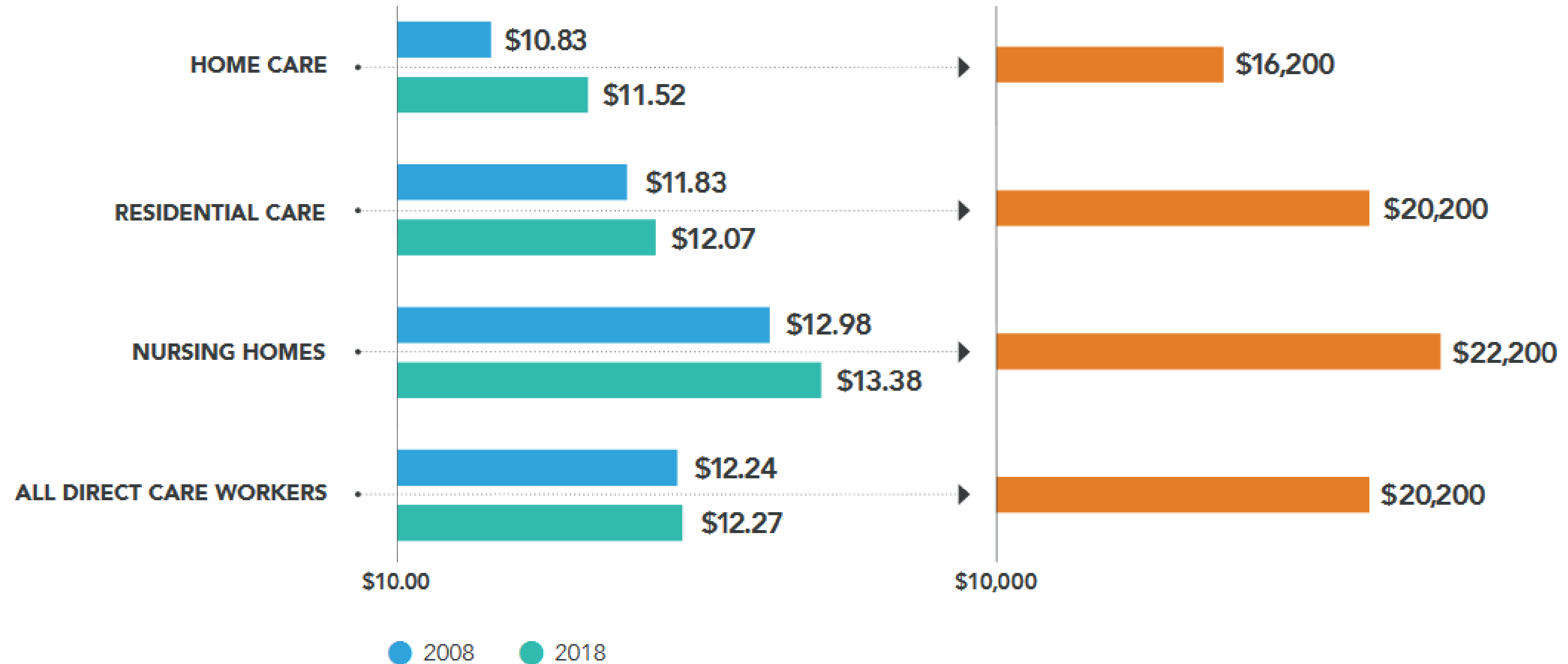
Median age of
direct care
workers is **41**
years

59%
of direct care
workers are
people of
color

1 in 4 direct
care workers
are born
outside the
U.S.

**MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES
ACROSS SETTINGS, 2008-2018**

**MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS
ACROSS SETTINGS, 2017**



Source: [It's Time to Care \(PHI, 2020\)](#)



Segment 3:

The Shortage: Consequences,
Causes and Solutions



Nancy Rollins

Easter Seals, Chief Operating
Officer

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Historical challenges related to workforce shortages

- Low Wages
- Poor access to health insurance
- Lack of paid time off
- Stress and demands of the job
- Insufficient training and supervision
- Lack of professional recognition

Early Status During the Pandemic

- Lack of Consistent Knowledge added to fears for personal and family safety.
- Fear of bringing the virus into client homes
- Initial information about and access to personal protection equipment was challenging.
- Scheduling nightmares if staff tested positive, or had come into contact with someone who was positive.
- Further stressors if staff were homeschooling children / or grandchildren

Current timeframe

- Numbers of affected staff and clients served in in-home or community residences have been few when compared to congregate care settings.
- Policies / guidelines in place for staff safety temperature checks; increased hand sanitizing/ washing; PPE and testing availability.
- Many staff remained working due to their relationships with clients.
- Governor's Long Term Care Stabilization Funds helped immensely to support workers. Many thought twice about taking a furlough or going out on unemployment.
- BUT, people are still not coming in droves to fill vacant positions.

Potential Solutions:

- Increase wages; better benefits; consider certification; add incentives such as, scholarship programs, tuition reimbursement, student loan forgiveness, access to workforce housing and better public transportation. Need an Advocacy campaign at the National level to raise LTC reimbursement tied to wages.

But, this isn't enough. Increased support (\$) is inherently tied to the need to raise societal value for direct support care for seniors. "Respect the work, respect the workers".

- What are the underlying reasons? Need to address the 'societal stigma of aging'.
- Address inherent differences in waiver design, delivery and reimbursement.
- Revisit our approach to caring for elders - "doing for versus doing with"
- Revisit how 'medical necessity is defined'. Service assessment needs to go beyond Activities of daily living to include mental health assessments and encourage behaviors and activities that support well-being.
- Need true person-centered, individualized care plans that includes mental health and assisting seniors with maintaining community inclusion and address social determinants of health.



Final Segment



Question & Answer

Contact Us!

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A Discussion Guide

Call to Care NH

Call to Care NH is a 30-minute segment produced by NH PBS and the Endowment for Health. The program explores the challenges presented as we are living longer and the demand for people to provide care is growing faster than the supply.

[Watch the full documentary here.](#)

[Click here to access the discussion guide.](#)

Interested in hosting a screening in your community? Contact Laura Davie at Laura.Davie@unh.edu

Save the date for our next webinar

Join us for the second webinar focused on the opportunities, policy levers, and solutions to bolster the direct care workforce during the pandemic and beyond. This session will include an overview of educational/training efforts along with policy and advocacy opportunities to address the direct care workforce shortage in New Hampshire.

Date: Wednesday, August 5th

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Panelists:

- Susan Huard, Interim Chancellor for Community College System of New Hampshire
- Jennifer Rabalais, Co-Director Center on Aging and Community Living, UNH
- Deb Scheetz (*invited*), Director Division of Long -Term Services and Supports, NH DHHS
- Heather Carroll (*invited*), Director, AHA Advocacy

Registration to open soon

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Laura Davie, NH Alliance for Healthy Aging

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