FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Who Will Care for Mom?

High Growth Job Category Won't Keep Pace with Demand for Caregivers in California

[MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA -- Jan. 22] Reports from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that predict an increase in the personal and home care aides job category - forecasting that to be the second fastest-growing job group in the nation over the next decade - is welcome news in a recession. But the rapid growth in this job group may not be fast enough. One local senior-care provider - Home Instead Senior Care - says the company's recent research indicates that demand for these jobs will outpace supply in a big way.

"This could become a national crisis issue," said Michelle Rogers, owner of the Home Instead Senior Care office serving Mountain View, CA. "At our company alone - the largest of its kind, but one of many throughout our country - the number of CAREGivers nationally is about 60,000. To keep pace with this projected demand, our company will have to double its care force in just three years, according to our research," she noted. "On a positive note, these projections will result in job opportunities for area workers hit hard by the economy, providing a flexible part-time option for additional income or a new career in a fulfilling job field - caring for older adults."

In California, the personal and home care aides job category is expected to increase from 284,200 jobs in 2006 to 361,100 positions in 2016 - a projected 27 percent increase. The influx of state jobs to this occupation is mirroring what is happening throughout the country. Nationwide, the personal and home care aides classification is expected to grow by more than 50 percent between 2006 and 2016, increasing from 767,000 to a projected 1.15 million jobs.

The government identifies personal and home care aides as professionals who help the elderly, disabled, ill and mentally disabled live in their own homes or in residential care facilities instead of in health facilities. The growing number of seniors in the U.S. as well as locally is expected to help fuel this job demand. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population age 65 and older is projected to double between 2000 and 2050.

"We've certainly seen the needs of seniors in our area drive the demand for our services, which in turn creates more caregiving jobs," said Rogers. The local Home Instead Senior Care office is part of an international franchise company whose professional CAREGivers go into the homes of seniors to help them with their non-medical needs such as companionship, meal preparation, light housekeeping, medication reminders, errands and shopping.

Home Instead Senior Care

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National research conducted by the company reveals that 86 percent of seniors want to continue living in their homes as they age. This surge in seniors at home will help fuel the demand for these new positions as well.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Economist Colleen Teixeira Moffat, who studies the occupation of personal and home care aides, said increasing health-care costs partly explain this growing demand. "It's a lot more cost-effective to leave a hospital sooner when all a senior might need is assistance with daily activities," she said. "A visiting nurse, home health aide, and personal and home care aide all will be cheaper than a stay in a residential care facility," she said.

The job's flexibility also is attractive, she noted. "The education requirements are not high, so this job may be appealing to an individual who is new to this country or someone who wants to put off college for awhile. A job such as this can give people an opportunity to get a feel for working with others. It's also a flexible job for those taking care of their own families or looking for a second job," Teixeira Moffat added. Home Instead Senior Care also has discovered that seniors themselves make great caregivers.

The training process for the profession is comprehensive but not lengthy, industry experts note. Caregivers typically complete a four-step training program, which provides the basic skills and, for some, advanced skills necessary to care for seniors. These include a focus on safety, communications, emergency first aid, activities and routine meal preparation and light housekeeping. The more advanced training prepares caregivers to perform personal services such as toileting and bathing.

Caregiving companies are gearing up to meet this expected caregiving need by offering incentive recruiting programs and reaching out to groups that have proven to be attracted to this job category such as older adults. "At Home Instead Senior Care, we have focused our efforts on retaining quality CAREGivers, who in turn can recruit other outstanding CAREGivers," Rogers said.
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http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab21.htm
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