

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF GUIDE

Background

Measurement of long-term care direct care worker (DCW) perceptions and outcomes is a field that is in its early stages of development. The Institute for the Future of Aging Services (IFAS) has developed this Guide to help long-term care (LTC) organizations improve their use of measurement tools to understand direct care workforce problems and to inform their solutions. This Guide has been funded by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Office of Policy of the U.S. Department of Labor.

This Guide relies heavily on a review of existing workforce measures by researchers at The Pennsylvania State University (PSU), who assessed the utility of instruments for measuring the direct care workforce. The choice of topics and instruments included in this Guide was made jointly by PSU and IFAS teams and will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3. The choice of instruments was also based on review and input from 24 Key Informants with expertise in analyzing and/or evaluating workforce recruitment and retention practices and who represent potential users of the Guide -- providers, worker groups, researchers, workforce development representatives, and state agencies. A Technical Expert Panel (TEP) shared ideas for further development of the Guide at a meeting in September 2003. Appendix H lists the reviewers and TEP members and their affiliations.

A draft version of the Guide was completed in November 2003. IFAS staff held a pre-conference session to introduce the Guide and its uses at the annual meeting of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA), a membership association of not-for-profit LTC providers of residential housing and services, and made a presentation to AAHSA members at their Future of Aging Services spring conference. IFAS staff also presented information on the Guide at the annual meetings of the American Society on Aging (ASA)-National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). Extensive feedback on content and format obtained from attendees of these meetings as well as other recipients of the draft version of the Guide informed this final version.

Key Terminology

Certain terms that are used frequently in this Guide have particular meanings. For the purpose of this Guide, **direct care workers (DCWs)** refer to nursing assistants (NAs), home health and home care aides, personal care workers and personal care attendants who provide hands-on care, supervision and emotional support to people with chronic

illnesses and disabilities. DCWs work in a variety of settings, including nursing homes, assisted living and other residential care settings, adult day care and private homes.

Formulas refer to how information collected from administrative records will be used to create variables. **Surveys** and **questionnaires** are used interchangeably throughout the Guide when discussing worker surveys. **Scales** are survey components that examines specific issues related to the topic being examined. **Subscales** are sections of a scale that measure the concept being studied in a subscale in greater detail. **Instruments** or **measures** are general terms used to refer to both formulas and surveys.

Scope and Purpose of the Guide

The Guide is meant to serve as a starting point for measurement of LTC workforce problems and possible solutions. Providers that already survey workers or collect information on retention and turnover may find the instruments reviewed here useful for enhancing their efforts. Providers that do not yet collect information on their DCWs will learn some of the benefits and become more informed of possible ways to measure direct care workers' experiences and behaviors. Providers can benefit by using appropriate instruments as tools to understand what their workers want and how providers are doing in keeping DCWs.

The Guide presents a collection of instruments that quantify different ways to look at worker outcomes and worker experiences through employee surveys. These instruments have been used in the real world to assess how employees feel and think about their jobs and their employer and whether they stay or leave their jobs. Instruments to measure 12 topics of greatest relevance to DCWs have been included in the Guide, many of which have been applied in acute care or LTC settings.² Some topics that are relevant to the LTC workforce, such as absenteeism and use of temporary workers, were excluded when valid instruments for measuring them were unavailable.

While all of the instruments in the Guide have been used in work settings, in Chapter 3 we highlight ones that have been used in health care settings and with DCWs and that meet specific criteria detailed in that Chapter.³ The instruments in the Guide are generally more applicable to nursing homes than other provider settings, because few instruments to date have been developed for home and community-based care settings.

² To date, more research has been conducted on measuring employee outcomes and experiences in acute care settings, so many instruments in the Guide are those used in these settings. These instruments have been included because they can be applied to LTC settings.

³ However, we strongly encourage organizations to “pre-test” any instrument with a small number of DCWs in their setting before using it with the entire community, facility, agency or unit. Testing can help uncover questions that do not make sense to DCWs, are hard to understand, or are not appropriate.

Two major types of instruments are in this Guide. One type uses formulas to calculate rates based on data that may already be collected through employment records. A second type requires the collection of new data in order to understand DCWs' perceptions and attitudes about their jobs or the organization. This type of information is collected through survey questionnaires administered to DCWs.

This Guide is not a “how-to” manual. It will not identify the “best” instrument for every possible circumstance, nor will it tell providers how to select instruments for an organization's specific purposes, administer surveys to DCWs, or undertake other data collection efforts. **Organizations lacking staff with research experience may find it helpful to work with a local researcher, university (e.g., survey research center, nursing department, organizational studies or labor department) or data collection vendor.** The Guide will not provide tips on how to build capacity in an organization to gather, analyze and use information or how to conduct evaluations of programs and practices already in place. This Guide is not a retention program in itself.

Overview of Guide

This Chapter has provided a background and outlined the purpose and scope of this Guide.

Chapter 2 discusses how organizations can benefit from using these instruments and provides examples of how others use information collected from measurement instruments in a meaningful way.

Chapter 3 reviews the workforce topics, instruments and subscales included in the Guide, how they were selected, and identifies those currently ready for use.

Appendices A through H can be found on the CD-ROM in the pocket of this binder. These Appendices include valuable information:

- **Appendix A** includes sample scenarios of how organizations might use the Guide to select and/or develop survey instruments to meet their organizational goals.
- **Appendix B** provides overview charts of all measures in a given topic, which compare properties (e.g., readability, reliability, validity, administration and scoring, etc.) and their relative advantages.
- **Appendix C** discusses issues to think about when planning and implementing a data collection and analysis process.
- **Appendix D** presents templates for types of letters to accompany surveys, encourage employees to partake in the survey process or thank responding

employees, as well as other resources for providers considering surveying employees.

- **Appendix E** contains measures that use survey instruments to collect data included in Chapter 3 as separate files for use, by topic.
- **Appendix F** provides two multi-topic survey instruments developed for use with DCWs, but have not yet been tested for reliability and validity.
- **Appendix G** includes instruments that have not been used with DCWs and instruments meant to measure manager needs or experiences (which are not the focus of this Guide) that may prove useful.
- **Appendix H** provides the names and affiliations of Key Informants and Technical Expert Panel members who contributed significantly to the Guide's development.

MEASURING LONG-TERM CARE WORK: A Guide to Selected Instruments to Examine Direct Care Worker Experiences and Outcome

PDF Files Available for This Report

Cover, Table of Contents, Acknowledgments and Executive Summary

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguide.pdf>

CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Purpose of Guide

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguide1.pdf>

CHAPTER 2: How This Guide Can Help Organizations Use Information to Address the Challenges of Job Retention and Performance Among DCWs

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguide2.pdf>

CHAPTER 3: Ready to Use Instruments <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguide3.pdf>

References <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguide4.pdf>

APPENDIX A: From Start to Finish -- Sample Scenarios of Using and/or Constructing Survey Instruments <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideA.pdf>

APPENDIX B: Overview Charts of Chapter 3 Measures, By Topic

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideB.pdf>

APPENDIX C: Data Collection Planning and Implementation Issues

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideC.pdf>

APPENDIX D: Resources for Providers Considering Use of Employee Surveys

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideD.pdf>

APPENDIX E: Individual Measures from Chapter 3 that Use Survey Instruments to Collect Data, By Topic <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideE.pdf>

APPENDIX F: Ready Made Multi-Topic Survey Instruments

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideF.pdf>

APPENDIX G: Instruments Needing Work <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideG.pdf>

APPENDIX H: Guide Reviewers <http://aspe.hhs.gov/daltcp/reports/dcwguideH.pdf>