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Iowa Health Care Association Foundation Announces COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund to Support Senior Health Care Workers

West Des Moines, Iowa – The Iowa Health Care Association (IHCA) Foundation has launched a new crisis relief fund to support Iowa’s senior health care workers in preventing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

“COVID-19 has been especially devastating to our country’s most vulnerable, and most notably the elderly and those with acute medical needs requiring long-term care. Our senior health care workers have had to navigate an ever-evolving and uncertain environment to quickly and courageously implement unprecedented measures to protect their residents from this brutal virus, often times with limited resources and support,” said Lori Ristau, executive director of the IHCA Foundation. “As the battle with COVID-19 wages on, it is taking a heavy toll on those who live and work in long-term care. Our senior health care workers on the frontlines need our support now more than ever. To help equip them with the tools and resources they need to fight COVID-19, the IHCA Foundation has established this new COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund.”

How can the COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund be used?

Iowa long-term care providers can use the fund to help prevent and mitigate COVID-19 based on their organization’s specific needs. Whether it is providing additional support to senior health care staff working in a COVID-19 isolation unit, such as purchasing additional personal protective equipment or providing counseling support to help avoid burnout, or additional screening supplies such as thermometers and testing kits to help prevent the virus from getting into a long-term care setting, this fund is designed to help. It could also be used for resources to facilitate safe patient and family communications or resident activities to mitigate feelings of isolation due to COVID-19.

“If it is an idea that will help support our long-term care staff and residents in alleviating the impact of COVID-19, I encourage our member long-term care providers to consider applying for this fund,” adds Ristau.

Any member in good standing of the Iowa Health Care Association or its affiliates, Iowa Center for Assisted Living or Iowa Center for Home Care can apply for up to a maximum of \$1,000 in a relief grant. Together, the members of these organizations account for nearly 700 of Iowa’s long-term care providers. The application form is available online at www.iowahealthcare.org/get-involved/foundation/covid-relief-fund/.

How can I support the COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund?

The COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund was established with \$20,000 from IHCA Foundation reserves, and will be available as long as funds last.

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“This funding will not last long given the severity and breadth of the impact COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, on long-term care residents and staff. The need for support is great, with over 400 Iowa skilled nursing facilities, 200 assisted living communities and 100 home health providers in Iowa who are caring for the elderly and vulnerable during this health pandemic,” said Ristau. “These long-term care workers have a strong history of providing compassionate care for others when they need it most, and now they need our support. All donations are welcome and will allow us to help more long-term care providers as this health care crisis continues.”

Donations to the IHCA Foundation COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund can be made online at:

www.iowahealthcare.org/get-involved/foundation/

About the Iowa Health Care Association Foundation

Founded in 1988 by the Iowa Health Care Association (IHCA), the mission of the IHCA Foundation is to foster excellence in long-term care for Iowans by building a stronger workforce. The IHCA Foundation carries out this mission by empowering individuals to reach their career goals in the long-term care profession through scholarships, career education and career access programs. IHCA Foundation programs help support career opportunities available in the long-term care continuum, including nursing facilities, assisted living programs, residential care facilities, senior living communities and home health agencies.

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