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Statewide survey: people with disabilities, older adults and their caregivers suffering daily from care worker shortage, fear grim future lies ahead.

Today, Survival Coalition released the [results of a statewide survey](#) of people with disabilities, older adults, family members, and care workers who are living with the daily consequences of a missing caregiver workforce.

The results are grim for all communities in Wisconsin.

People with disabilities and older adults are reporting the daily consequences of the care worker shortage. The crisis is impacting health and well-being including pressure sores and being stuck in beds or wheelchairs. People report being unable to get to bathroom, eat, or get dressed. Unable to get to work or accept a job because of unreliable care worker coverage. Some have already been forced into nursing homes or hospitals.

The future feels even more dire for those who need additional or regular supply of care workers. Almost two-thirds worry they will not be able to stay in their homes or live independently. Almost two-thirds worry what will happen to them if anything happens to family caregivers who are filling in the gaps.

“The survey results capture the very real and active crisis situation in Wisconsin. These are the immediate needs of our neighbors, co-workers, local businesses, friends and family members. Safety nets are no longer reliable or available,” said Patti Becker, Survival Coalition co-chair. “People and family caregivers are asking for help to continue a life at home and be members of their community. It’s where they want to be, can thrive, and it’s less expensive for everyone.”

Families are bearing the brunt of the care worker shortage. Almost 80% report spending most of their time caregiving, coordinating caregiving, or filling in for missing caregivers.

“It’s all consuming,” said Beth Swedeen, Survival Coalition Co-Chair. “There is never a moment when people with disabilities, people caring for an aging parent and families are not scrambling to fill in holes in a schedule.”

Almost two thirds of survey respondents report their families’ finances have been negatively impacted, and 50% report having to leave the workforce or reduce hours to take on caregiving responsibilities because there are no care workers to hire.

When people are forced to sit out their prime working years, they lose income and purchasing power, decrease overall lifetime earnings, employer sponsored health care coverage, and are unable to save for retirement.

“The missing care worker workforce is a root cause of other workforce shortages,” said Beth Swedeen, Survival Coalition co-chair. “Skilled workers are disappearing, retiring early, leaving the workforce entirely

for years, cutting hours, or are unable to advance their careers to provide care and keep people out of high-cost facilities that have their own care worker workforce shortages.”

“This can happen to anyone, any time, for a whole host of reasons. Accident. Injury. Dementia. Circumstance of birth,” said Kit Kerschensteiner, Survival Coalition Co-Chair. “This issue will touch every family in Wisconsin. The odds of needing care at some point in your life are high. No matter who or where you are, this crisis is here, and it is coming for you.”