

# Gov. Walker: Celebrates Wisconsin's nursing assistants, proclaims Nursing Assistant Week

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*More than 1800 enroll in WisCaregiver Career program, aimed at addressing workforce shortage in the field*

DE PERE – Governor Scott Walker recognized and honored Wisconsin certified nursing assistants, home-care aides and patient-care assistants today, proclaiming the week of June 11-17, 2018 as Nursing Assistant Week at Rennes Health & Rehab Center in De Pere.

“These well-trained, caring professionals provide the vast majority of daily, hands-on care that Wisconsin’s most vulnerable citizens in nursing homes and other long-term care settings depend on,” said Governor Walker. “Across the state, nursing assistants are on the front line of caregiving, and we need to recognize their commitment to improving the lives of their patients.”

The Department of Health Services (DHS), in partnership with nursing homes, LeadingAge Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Health Care Association, the Board on Aging and Long Term Care and the Wisconsin Technical College System, developed the WisCaregiver Careers program to help address the workforce shortage in the field of nursing. Between 2015 and 2040, Wisconsin’s population of those ages 65 and older is projected to grow by 640,000 people, an increase of 72 percent. Currently, more than one in five caregiving staff positions in Wisconsin go unfilled, and the need will only increase as the population ages.

WisCaregiver Careers is an innovative program designed to recruit, train, and retain 3,000 nursing assistants in Wisconsin's nursing home workforce. This first-of-its-kind program provides participants free nurse aide training and testing and includes a \$500 retention bonus paid by participating nursing homes.

“We are pleased that Governor Walker and other state leaders have made it a priority to keep the quality of care provided to seniors high in Wisconsin,” said Cory J. Spice, President of Rennes Group. “The WisCaregiver Career Program is assisting Rennes in creating an awareness of the need for caregivers. The Program is lowering barriers to enter a career as a nursing assistant in our company and all senior living organizations statewide. Ultimately, our future employees and our seniors will benefit from this initiative.”

To date, more than 1,800 students have registered to be WisCaregivers. One of them is already employed, 64 have completed training, and 385 are scheduled to begin. Thirteen technical colleges and 17 nursing homes with approved nurse aide training programs are participating, as are 300 Wisconsin nursing homes that have pledged to provide the \$500 retention bonus after six months employment. Learn more about [WisCaregiver Careers](#).

The Rennes Group is a family owned and operated senior living company that has provided care to seniors for over four decades in northeast and central Wisconsin. Rennes has more than 1600 employees including 434 certified nursing assistants, 137 caregivers, and 255 nurses (RN/LPNs). Rennes facilities offer short term rehab, long term care, outpatient therapy, assisted living, and memory care and have a reputation for outstanding care combined with state of the art, modern facilities. Rennes opens its 12th facility this summer.

A copy of Governor Walker's Nursing Assistant Week proclamation is [here](#).