



Without Direct Care Workers, Michigan’s behavioral health framework quickly collapses.

In fact, it’s already beginning to do so.

Today, Michigan’s entire system of supports for people with mental health challenges and developmental disabilities is anchored in a single assumption: that Direct Care Workers will always be available to help provide services.

Unfortunately, that is no longer the case.
And Michigan families are already facing a state of emergency.

From Monroe to Marquette, the situation is the same.
Salaries are going up for everyone except DCWs.

- *Most DCWs in Michigan earn a starting wage of \$14.35 per hour, according to recent survey findings. This includes the \$2.35 per hour premium pay increase.*

This level of compensation is just too low to keep DCWs on the job.

Today’s labor market, coupled with inflationary pressures and gas prices, is pushing many DCWs away from the system. Today, DCW employee turnover is nearly 45 percent.

And that system? It’s starting to resemble a house of cards.

- *People end up going without the much-needed personal care, training, emotional support and respite they urgently need.*
- *Across Michigan, people are entering emergency rooms—often for extended periods—when no DCWs can be found.*

Without DCWs, Michigan’s behavioral health framework quickly collapses. In fact, it’s already beginning to do so.

Legislative action is needed to increase the DCW starting wage rate to a minimum of \$18.00 per hour.

It’s too late for the FY 2023 budget cycle, but we believe this is an essential budget item for FY 2024. Without action, our state faces almost-certain catastrophe.

Unfortunately, FY 2024 is simply too far away for most families. The DCW care crisis is happening here and now.

Michigan’s legislature must immediately appropriate emergency funds to keep DCWs in the behavioral health sector on the job.

- *Our coalition asks for \$175 million in ARPA money to pay retention bonuses for more than 50,000 Michigan DCWs.*

Urgent legislative action is essential to prevent the looming behavioral health crisis that awaits.