

INCOMPASS MICHIGAN AND MALA WORKFORCE SURVEY REPORT - March 2025

Incompass Michigan and Michigan Assisted Living Association conducted our 8th annual statewide workforce survey in March 2025.

The purpose of this survey is to obtain data on wage levels, turnover rates, and other important workforce information related to direct support staff providing behavioral health services that demonstrates the depth and scope of the Direct Care Workforce crisis.

Average Number of Full Time and Part Time Direct Support Staff	94	Total Number of Front Line Supervisors	872
2024 Survey results	114	2024 Survey results	1,000
Average Starting Wage Rate	\$16.06 / hour		\$20.46 / hour
2024 Survey results	\$15.72 / hour		\$20.03 / hour
Average Current Wage Rate	\$17.39 / hour		\$23.28 / hour
2024 Survey results	\$17.12 / hour		\$21.88 / hour
Average Annual Turnover Rate	39.2%		5.9%
2024 Survey results	35.9%		10.1%
% of open/unfilled positions	13.8%		5.1%
2024 Survey results	18.2%		8.3%

Respondents Noted:

“The staffing shortage is a threat to health and safety throughout the system.”

“We’re concerned about burnout due to increased overtime.”

“Primary challenge with hiring and retaining is related to wages.”

80 organizations employing approximately 7,500 direct support staff from across the state responded to the workforce survey.

Respondents represent all 10 regions of Michigan's Community Mental Health System.

- Nearly 31% have health and/or safety concerns for individuals supported.
- 87% of those who have refused additional work or programming in the last 12 months did so due to an inability to recruit staff.
- 16% discontinued programs within the last 6 months.

Approximately 300,000 individuals receive specialty behavioral health services and rely on Direct Care Workers (DCWs) for their daily support and independence. DCWs provide personal care, vocational services and community living supports to persons with disabilities.

Unfortunately, DCW wages in Michigan's behavioral health system are directly tied to Medicaid funding, which has not kept pace with the needs of our state. As a result, Michigan DCWs bring home small paychecks, and often have more than one job.

Consequently, thousands of DCWs are making a natural decision to leave the profession for jobs that allow them to better support themselves and their families.

This leaves tens of thousands of Michigan residents facing:

- Emergency situations in which care is not available
- Chronic or extended hospitalizations (we're talking months, not weeks)
- Reliance on aging parents for ongoing care
- And, most important of all, a loss of the independence they enjoyed when DCWs were available

The natural outcome of these changes? The continued collapse of Michigan's behavioral health system, and a worsening state of emergency for families.

Michigan needs to fulfill the promise of a world-class environment promoting economic development and a talented workforce: equitable wages for direct care workers, less time doing paperwork and more time taking care of people, and an accessible career pathway to professionalize the field.



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A statewide network of human service providers committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, optimal independence and engagement in the community, with enhanced quality and fullness of life.



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Nonprofit organization representing community-based providers supporting individuals with disabilities in the behavioral health and long-term care systems.