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Hearing Title: *The Long-Term Care Workforce: Addressing Shortages and Improving the*
Profession
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Chairman Casey, Ranking Member Braun, and Members of Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to represent Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana and share the work that we are doing to address the healthcare workforce shortage, including the shortage of long-term care workers, throughout the state.

Today, I will provide background on Ivy Tech and our leadership in producing long-term care professionals in Indiana and share how Ivy Tech's programs – specifically, our Healthcare Academy and Achieve Your Degree programs – have enabled us to respond to the healthcare workforce shortage in the state. I will also discuss how state flexibility has enabled Ivy Tech's abilities to educate and produce members of the long-term care workforce.

Ivy Tech Community College is Indiana's largest postsecondary institution, serving more than 190,000 students at our 19 campuses and 26 satellite locations as well as online. Nearly half of these students (91,737) are pursuing college credit while in high school. Ivy Tech is the nation's largest singly accredited statewide community college system and its leading provider of dual credit. No other American institution graduates more associate-level nurses than Ivy Tech; in Indiana, one in three Registered Nurses is an Ivy Tech alum. More than 90% of our nursing graduates choose to remain in the state and work in Indiana hospitals and care settings.

Our system's size enables Ivy Tech to operate at scale to address the State of Indiana's most urgent workforce needs, and we offer many programs focusing on educating and developing graduates who can enter the field and support long-term care workforce demands. Our programming includes traditional academic associate degree offerings, such as our Nursing, Physical Therapist Assistant, and Healthcare Specialist degree programs. Ivy Tech also offers various long-term technical certificates in health sciences and nursing, including the Practical Nurse (LPN) and Healthcare Specialist - Clinical Support certificates. Finally, short-term academic and skills training certificates, including the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Qualified Medication Aide (QMA), Long Term Care Specialist in Geriatric Care, Home Health Aide, Dementia Care Aide, and Patient Care Tech certificates are designed to help graduates enter the workforce quickly and provide critical services for our long-term care populations at a tuition rate that is the lowest in the state.

These examples are meant to offer a sample of the industry-aligned healthcare programming offered at Ivy Tech. We are continuously developing new education and training pathways to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve with programming such as the Direct Support Mental Health and Community Health Worker certificates.

How Ivy Tech's programs have enabled us to respond to Indiana's healthcare workforce shortage

In Indiana, like many regions across the nation, we witnessed a convergence of factors that contributed to a critical shortage of healthcare workers. This "perfect storm" affected and continues to affect multiple career fields within healthcare. Addressing this crisis requires a multifaceted approach and innovative

solutions to make the healthcare sector more resilient and sustainable. As Indiana's workforce engine, Ivy Tech saw a need for innovative solutions to create more access opportunities and awareness around careers in healthcare.

Thanks to a generous grant from United Healthcare, the College is in its second year of a program called the Ivy Tech Healthcare Academy. The Academy provides summer programming for rising ninth through twelfth graders in the State of Indiana. High school students participate in eight weeks of intensive healthcare-focused career exploration – including pathways in the long-term care sector – while completing 4.5 credits of academic course work that can transfer into various Ivy Tech healthcare programs and 3-5 skills training courses focusing on skills and competencies required for entry-level direct care (called direct service in Indiana) and long-term care roles. To date, more than 200 high school students have enrolled in the program.

Through the College's Achieve Your Degree program, Ivy Tech is removing barriers to upskilling for nearly 300 Indiana employers, including over 200 in the healthcare sector. The program allows workers of employer partners to earn an approved associate degree or credential at minimal or zero upfront cost to them, enabling them to pay for classes after completing classes complete using employer tuition reimbursement benefits. Traditionally, higher education programs require payment upon enrollment; Achieve Your Degree adopts an "earn, learn, and return" model to provide a path for companies to skill up their workforce while affording long-term care workers more opportunities to participate and move into higher-wage, direct care roles.

We also recognize that work is a priority for adults who have potential to transition to long-term care roles. Ivy Tech is responding by partnering with stakeholders across the state to create new education pipelines, such as apprenticeships, to enable students to continue to financially support themselves and their families while earning credits toward a high-quality healthcare credential. We are partnering with health care employers to design and launch registered and non-registered apprenticeships that create opportunities for students to access on-the-job training. In these models, students are hired by companies in entry-level positions and offered opportunities to earn a wage as they complete educational training. As they progress within the apprenticeship, they earn higher wages on their way to a career in healthcare.

Ivy Tech has been fortunate to achieve this impact through strategic partnerships with professional associations like Indiana Healthcare Association (IHCA), and Indiana Hospital Association (IHA). Together, we have successfully partnered with leaders in the Indiana General Assembly to create more flexibility in how the College opens, delivers, and expands our healthcare programming. In 2022, our coalition helped pass House Enrolled Act 1003: Nursing Indiana Back to Health – legislation that removed limits on how fast two and four-year nursing programs can grow their enrollment totals, allowed nursing schools to replace some required clinical hours with simulation hours, and allowed two-year programs to hire more part-time faculty. HEA 1003 empowered the College to address barriers to our nursing program expansion and serves as an example of how providing local control over how and when our nursing programs expand afford us opportunities to customize our work to meet the needs of our students and communities. Through this legislation, Ivy Tech added 766 new nursing seats across the state through the start of classes in Spring 2024, and importantly, increased the quality of our nursing programs. In 2023, we saw an increase in our NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN rates during the expansion to over 90% and 97%, respectively. We are actively exploring how we might partner with the Indiana legislature to gain similar allowances in additional high-need healthcare workforce areas, such those needed to address long-term care in the future.

The College also benefits from our close relationship and work with Indiana agencies around workforce generation. As Indiana completes its work to revamp Medicaid administration across the state, Ivy Tech advising the Family and Social Services Administration and Division of Mental Health and Addiction on how to build a robust talent pipeline to meet current and future workforce needs, including understanding what jobs will exist – such as direct service workers – and building and facilitating academic and skills training pathways within K-12, two- and four-year institutions.

Several state and local programs have also increased our ability to respond to the evolving needs of the healthcare workforce. Governor Eric Holcomb's Next Level Jobs initiative provides critical funding for key workforce areas, including those that support long-term care, and the city of Indianapolis' Modern Youth Apprenticeship program has the potential to increase the number of Central Indiana high school students who gain paid, hands-on experience in healthcare professions that complement their traditional academic coursework.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before this committee and share the work of Ivy Tech Community College. I applaud and appreciate your leadership and service to our country.