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## **Dislocated Worker Pilot Program Launches in Elkhart County**

*Partnership matches workers with local employment opportunities in long term care*

**INDIANAPOLIS** – The Indiana Health Care Foundation launched yesterday a dislocated worker pilot program to match workers that have been permanently laid off with local employment opportunities in long term care. The program is a partnership between the Indiana Health Care Foundation, the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana.

A number of dislocated workers participated in the exploratory program held at Miller’s Merry Manor, a nursing home in Wakarusa, Indiana. The pilot program was launched in Elkhart County, an area that has been severely affected by recent layoffs in the RV industry and has a current unemployment rate of 18 percent.

“The provision of a quality long term care program is dependent upon a stable, well-trained workforce,” said Stephen Smith, President of the Indiana Health Care Association. “The dislocated worker program presents a great opportunity to address the current workforce shortage in long term care by tapping into a ready, willing and qualified pool of workers.”

“Many dislocated workers were previously employed in industries that are disappearing,” said Mickey Kinder, Director of the Dislocated Worker Program for the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. “Healthcare is an in demand field that is not going away. This program will allow workers to transition into a growing industry with increasing opportunity.”

Workers participated in a skills assessment, screening for long-term care positions, an overview on the requirements of working in long term care, and one-on-one meetings with company representatives that are hiring in the long-term care industry.

Tracy Guffey, a participant from Elkhart said that she is more interested in pursuing a position in long term care. “I think the program was helpful,” she said.

Workers completed an on-site employment application and skills assessment administered by local Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) employees. Depending on training needs, DWD employees will work with the dislocated workers to identify appropriate training through Ivy Tech Community College.

“Ivy Tech has always been vital to the retraining of Indiana’s workforce, but our work becomes much more urgent during these crucial economic times, and we are honored to be working with the IHCA and DWD to provide much-needed training to these workers,” said Ivy Tech Community College President Thomas J. Snyder.

“The goal of the dislocated worker pilot program is to develop a pipeline that introduces qualified workers to positions in long term care,” said Smith. “Based on the success of the pilot, the program will be replicated in other regions of the State.”

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*The Indiana Health Care Foundation is the 501 (c)(3) non-profit entity of the Indiana Health Care Association (IHCA), the State’s largest trade association and advocate representing proprietary, not-for-profit and hospital-based nursing home and assisted living communities. IHCA’s nearly 300 member facilities care for more than 25,000 of Indiana’s geriatric and developmentally disabled citizens, the majority of whom are Medicaid recipients.*