



## Cooperative Care

Cooperative Care provides quality home health care in rural Wisconsin.

### Cooperative Care at a glance

**Cooperative Care**, a worker-owned home care business in rural Wisconsin, is committed to maintaining a culture of respect and understanding while providing the highest quality of care. ICA has helped the business strengthen their management culture by providing technical assistance, strategic planning, and leadership development.

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Providing quality home care in rural areas presents a number of challenges for American businesses operating in the home care field: clients are spread across a large geographic area, retaining skilled staff is difficult but also critical to maintain specialized care, and wages are very low in the sector. For the past four years, the ICA Group has helped Cooperative Care, a worker-owned business in central Wisconsin, achieve success in the home care space. Creating a business culture that values and appreciates workers who provide meaningful care in their communities lies at the core of Cooperative Care's success. With ICA's support and guidance, the business operates in six different counties today, serving a diverse array of clients including seniors, people living with disabilities and mental illness, and children with autism.

The ICA Group began their work with Cooperative Care by providing consulting services including the development of a plan for expansion of the business, technical assistance, and management and board training that supported Cooperative Care's values. ICA assisted managers with financial and technical analysis, which led worker-owners to make important decisions about hiring practices and plans for the future. about industrial staffing in prospective target cities, which helped to confirm that the city of Philadelphia was best prepared for the workforce impact that First Step Staffing hoped to create.

ICA helped Cooperative Care identify a management structure that supported the business' commitment to accountability and transparency, and created a plan to improve employee retention. Articulating a plan that put employees at the center of its operations helped worker-owners develop their leadership skills, and encouraged the business to increase its advocacy within the home health care sector. Cooperative Care's management team shared,

**“Our new management structure, and our work with the ICA's technical assistance team, has allowed us to truly educate the board of directors and create much needed transparency. This alone has deepened our Cooperative Culture by better understanding the business model and the subsequent development of our leadership skills. With these new skills, our members have been given the opportunity to attend and speak at two national conferences with a focus on worker cooperatives.**

As Cooperative Care continues to grow, it continues to face challenges as a rural home care business. This requires regular evaluation of its business model, rigorous analysis of national trends impacting the home health care industry, and internal reviews of both management and staffing. The ICA Group will continue to support the business by developing a strategic analysis for growth and facilitating a strategic planning and training retreat. While pay in the home care industry is still far too low and operating a home care business in a rural area continues to be challenging, Cooperative Care serves as a leader in the sector, maintaining a culture where home care professionals have autonomy in their careers and where quality care and performance is rewarded. That focus is what drives the management team forward: “We have focused all our recruitment and retention efforts around the Cooperative Difference. Individual membership is the life blood of our organization!”



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