

Improving the Nursing Home Workforce and Resident Quality of Life using State and Federal Policy Levers

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October 19th, 2022

Nursing Homes are a part of the U.S. healthcare system that is often overlooked

- ▶ 1.3 million people live in U.S. nursing homes (about 4.5% of the population over age 65)
 - ▶ About 50% of nursing home residents are 85 years old or older
 - ▶ 35% are between the ages of 75 and 84
 - ▶ 15% are between 65 and 74 years of age.
- ▶ Fastest growing sub-populations are younger adults, those with mental/behavioral challenges, substance use disorder or SUD (in some states)
- ▶ 23% of the over 65 population identify as part of a racial or ethnic minority, yet minority residents make up less than 2% of the nursing home population in nearly half (43%) of U.S. nursing homes (Sloane et al., 2021)
- ▶ Minority residents are often in homes with lower staffing and quality ratings (although the quality of race/ethnicity/LGBTQ+ data is not robust)

The Nursing Home Workforce - who will care for and support us?

- ▶ About 1.5 million people work in nursing homes
- ▶ Over 520,000 are certified nursing assistants (CNAs) who spend the greatest number of hours daily with residents, providing care and support
- ▶ CNAs make, on average, \$15.41 (mean hourly wage) or \$32,050/year.
 - ▶ Bottom 10% earn less than \$22,750 (Bureau of Labor Statistics).
 - ▶ 34% require some form of public assistance
- ▶ CNA characteristics
 - ▶ Median age is 38 years
 - ▶ 91% are women, many single parents
 - ▶ 58% BIPOC
 - ▶ 21% born outside of the United States
 - ▶ Over 90% completed High School.

Certified Nursing Assistants need to be valued and empowered

- ▶ Poor, largely minority workers, often without benefits such as paid sick leave, childcare, transportation, funding or time off for continuing education
- ▶ CNAs are required to take 75 hours of basic training and pass a national certification exam before they may work in a nursing home
 - ▶ Some states have increased that basic number up to 120 hours
 - ▶ Some nursing homes add their own training - not all do
- ▶ Some CNAs report that they will leave and take a job in fast food that pays the same because the work is so much easier.
- ▶ We should challenge each member of Congress to work as a CNA for one day.

What about the role of nurses - registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs)?

- ▶ RNs make up only about 12% of nurses in nursing homes vs nearly 100% in hospitals.
- ▶ Research reflects that 75% of nursing homes were almost never in compliance with RN staffing levels (Geng, 2019)
 - ▶ 30% - 94% of nursing homes reported staff shortages during the pandemic (Paulin, 2021; AHCA, 2021).
- ▶ Average median hourly wage is \$31.00 for RNs and \$23.64 for LPNs
- ▶ In addition, nursing home RNs earn about \$10,000 less (more than 10% less) than hospital RNs on average.

What about Nursing Home Leaders - who are they?

- ▶ The top clinical leadership position in the nursing home is the Director of Nursing or DON
 - ▶ There is also a medical director, but they are not there 24/7 - and mostly have a role in policy and accepting new residents, depending on admission policies
 - ▶ 42% of DONs have been in their position less than a year
 - ▶ Most have an Associate's (2 year) or Diploma (3 year) degree, not a Bachelor's degree or higher. Limited training in leadership or management.
 - ▶ Nearly half of DONs report being 'pulled to work the floor' daily or weekly
 - ▶ Turnover among RN/LPN/CNAs is over 100% in many areas.

Licensed Nursing Home Administrators

- ▶ The other leader in a nursing home is the administrator (LNHA)
 - ▶ 33/50 states and DC require a bachelor's degree
 - ▶ 8 require only an associate's degree
 - ▶ 6 require a HS diploma
 - ▶ Four states (DE, IN, NY, NJ) do not indicate minimum eligibility requirements.
- ▶ Imagine living in a nursing home run by someone without a high school diploma, with a DON who has a two-year degree, very few registered nurses, CNAs with only 75 hours of training and limited supervision, and an annual turnover rate of over 100%.

The Changing Nursing Home Workforce and Role of Nursing Homes in Communities

- ▶ Over 240,000 nursing home workers were lost during the pandemic, and more are leaving every day
- ▶ We need fundamental changes in what nursing home jobs entail
- ▶ Estimates are that 300-500 nursing homes have closed during the pandemic; about 400 are predicted to close in 2022 alone
 - ▶ Not all communities and states have strong, alternative community-based models for care and support of all of us as we age - some do, some do not.
- ▶ **So...What Can We do Now? What can Congress do?**

Increase support and resources for state nursing workforce centers, federal integration and alignment across states

- ▶ There are examples of states that have been successful (to some extent) in developing and implementing programs to identify, recruit, train, support, and sustain nursing home workers such as nurses and CNAs.
- ▶ Some of those workforce initiatives included bonus payments, volunteers, temporary staff, lists of available workers
 - ▶ Michigan, Utah, Washington, California, Georgia, Delaware, Indiana, Wisconsin
- ▶ How can we learn from, then scale and spread those programs?
- ▶ <https://nursingworkforcecenters.org/>



Funded by The John A. Hartford Foundation, the Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition will develop and test action plans over the next two years based on the April 2022 NASEM Report recommendations on nursing home quality.

NASEM Report:

<https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/26526/the-national-imperative-to-improve-nursing-home-quality-honoring-our>

Moving Forward Coalition:

<https://movingforwardcoalition.org/>

The Time is NOW.

It is up to all of us to
come together and
test solutions.

Quality nursing home
care is what everyone
deserves.

**MOVING
FORWARD**
NURSING HOME QUALITY COALITION



Thank you!
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