



October 26, 2015

## Celebrating Our History and Honoring Our Gems

*As Consumer Voice Celebrates our 40th Anniversary we want to take this opportunity to reflect on our past and recognize the individuals who shaped our organization. In honor of the 40-year ruby anniversary we will highlight Consumer Voice's Gems which include key leaders, organizations, and special moments that have made a significant impact on our organization's development, mission, and advocacy.*

**For this month's gem, we celebrate  
our work to improve staffing standards.**



*Robyn Grant and other advocates show their support for higher staffing standards in nursing homes during a 2000 demonstration.*

Over the past 40 years, Consumer Voice has strongly advocated for improved nursing home staffing. Shortly after its formation, Consumer Voice – then NCCNHR – released the paper “The Plight of the Nurse Aide in America’s Nursing Homes: An Obstacle to Quality Care for Residents,” which recognized the importance of nurse assistants and identified staffing – adequate numbers, sufficient training, better pay and benefits - as core needs that are essential for quality care. Two decades later, NCCNHR/Consumer Voice helped bring about a hearing on Nursing Home Staffing by the Senate Special Committee on Aging in 1999 and worked with Congressional leaders to propose legislation mandating minimum staffing standards, that subsequently died.

But Consumer Voice persevered. It launched a [petition campaign](#), and in 2002, Consumer Voice President, Diane Menio, presented the names of almost 100,000 individuals in support of improving nursing home staffing standards during a congressional press conference on Capitol Hill. Three members of the House of Representatives accepted the names at the event hosted by former U.S. House Representative Henry Waxman of California.

Our advocacy continues today. In 2014, we launched the "Better Staffing: The Key to Better Care" [campaign](#) to educate the public and policymakers about the need for stronger state and federal nursing home staffing standards to ensure residents are receiving quality care. The campaign emphasizes the relationship between staffing and quality care, since even the best nurses and aides cannot deliver quality care if there aren't enough of them. Consumer Voice developed a toolkit for the campaign that includes materials such as campaign description handouts, fact sheets, postcards, a power point presentation, nursing home resident interview instructions, research related to staffing, and additional ways individuals can be involved in advocating for stronger staffing standards. The issue has garnered media attention and articles about the campaign and the importance of high quality staffing have been published. Most striking however, are the hundreds of post cards we have received in support of a minimum staffing standard of at least 4.1 hours of direct care nursing per resident per day.

As part of our staffing campaign, the Consumer Voice has advocated since 2014 for a registered nurse to be on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This year we supported H.R. 952, the Put a Registered Nurse in the Nursing Home Act, which would require nursing facilities that receive Medicaid and/or Medicare funding to have a direct care registered nurse (RN) round the clock. This is an important key to higher quality staffing, because federal law currently only requires nursing homes that receive Medicaid and/or Medicare funding to have an RN on duty for 8 hours a day/7 days a week. In May we co-hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill regarding the bill, which was well-attended by Congressional staff, and was featured in a New York Times article on the issue.

Most recently, as part of commenting on proposed revisions to the federal nursing home regulations released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in July 2015, Consumer Voice submitted strong recommendations calling for a minimum staffing standard of 4.1 hours of direct nursing care per resident per day and a registered nurse on staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. More than 70 national, state and local organizations and over 100 individuals. signed on to our comment letter.

Consumer Voice is committed to achieving a minimum staffing standard of at least 4.1 and 24-hour RN coverage. Study after study and the experiences of residents around the country show us that higher staffing levels result in improved resident outcomes. Please [join us](#) in this effort by spreading awareness and urging policymakers to put more nursing in nursing homes.

Visit our [website](#) for more information about the staffing campaign and to access the advocacy

toolkit, consumer education materials, additional resources regarding staffing, and learn how you can take action.

*Join us in celebrating 40 years of making quality care matter by signing this [e-card](#), sending a congratulatory message to [info@theconsumervoice.org](mailto:info@theconsumervoice.org), becoming a [member](#), and/or supporting our current and future work with a [contribution](#).*

*Like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) and visit our [40th Anniversary](#) webpage for additional information and opportunities to celebrate with us.*

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