

August 11, 2021

Senate Introduces Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act

Yesterday, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Senate Aging Committee Chairman Bob Casey (D-PA), along with Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), introduced the *Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act of 2021*. This legislation would increase transparency, accountability, and oversight in nursing homes, improve staffing, and support innovation in the structure and culture of these facilities.

More than 184,000 residents and staff died from COVID-19, and tens of thousands more from the effects of isolation and neglect. This tragedy shone a spotlight on broader, systemic, and long-standing problems in nursing homes, including inadequate staffing levels and lack of accountability. This legislation is critical for moving us forward toward achieving quality care and quality of life for long-term care facility residents.

Select provisions of the *Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act* include:

- Requiring minimum staffing standards based on updated studies
- Requiring a Registered Nurse onsite in nursing homes 24 hours/day, 7 days/week
- Mandating an Infection Preventionist at least 40 hours per week
- Reviewing how the survey and enforcement system can be improved and providing resources to make those improvements
- Auditing of SNF cost reports
- Banning pre-dispute arbitration agreements in nursing homes, HCBS and home health services
- Expanding the Special Focus Facility program to 5% of all SNFs
- Improving data collection and reporting requirements
- Enhancing funding through Medicaid to support staff improvements and increase wages and benefits
- Establishing a demonstration project to modify nursing home building requirements, i.e. limiting size to 5-14 residents, universal design, private bedrooms and bathrooms, shared living spaces

The Consumer Voice supports the legislation and looks forward to working with Senate and House members to ensure that its provisions will improve quality of care and quality of life for all residents of nursing homes.

We will continue to provide updates, information, and action steps as this legislation progresses.

Learn more about the *Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act of 2021* by accessing the [legislative text](#), a [bill summary](#), and a [section-by-section summary](#) of the bill.

For more information, contact the Consumer Voice at info@theconsumervoice.org.