



William Lamb, President
Sarah F. Wells, Executive Director
Ph: 202.332.2275
Fax: 866.230.9789
www.theconsumervoice.org

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Dear Commissioners:

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice), a national non-profit organization that advocates for quality care on behalf of long-term care consumers, welcomes the formation of the Commission on Long-Term Care. We commend each of you for your participation in this working group and your commitment to seeking collective recommendations for the improved provision and financing of long-term care services and supports in our nation.

Consumer Voice was originally formed as the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform in 1975 due to public concern about substandard care in nursing homes. Today, our organization is the leading national voice representing consumers on issues related to long-term care across all care settings, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves.

As an organization that has over 38 years of experience advocating for long-term care consumers, Consumer Voice recognizes the critical need for intelligent solutions to improve Americans' access to affordable, high-quality long-term services and supports. With the demand for long-term care set to increase dramatically in the coming decades, we can no longer afford to ignore our nation's lack of a coherent framework for the effective delivery and reasonable payment of such care. We ask that you consider the following as you continue your work to develop long-term care policy recommendations:

- The consideration of policies that would support affordable quality care and improved quality of life responsive to long-term care consumers' needs, including but not limited to: adequate staffing in long-term care facilities; reduction in the use of physical and chemical restraints among long-term care consumers; the protection of consumers' constitutional rights through the elimination of binding mandatory arbitration clauses in long-term care contracts and any other measures that make it more difficult for long-term care consumers to seek legal remedies.

- The need to develop, fund, strengthen and preserve programs, laws, and regulations that provide services for and protect long-term care consumers, such as the effective implementation of all long-term care provisions in the Affordable Care Act; federal regulation of assisted living; the preservation of adequate funding for the Older Americans Act, Medicaid and Medicare programs; mandated federal coverage of home and community-based services; and strong federal and state oversight and enforcement.
- The assurance that consumers in all long-term care settings have access to independent advocacy through the strengthening, preservation, expansion, and adequate funding of programs such as the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
- The establishment and enforcement of long-term care consumers' rights, including federally mandated rights for home care consumers and consumer rights and protections in all Medicaid waiver services, as well as Medicaid managed long-term services and supports programs.
- The promotion of the critical role of direct-care workers and best practices in quality-care delivery through the enactment of policies that increase training, wages and benefits for direct care workers; grant consumers enhanced flexibility and choice in their worker(s); and advance consumer safety through greater provider accountability and improved screening of prospective worker(s).

We look forward to the Commission's final recommendations and are pleased to offer you our knowledge and long-term care expertise if needed. Please do not hesitate to contact our Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, Robyn Grant, at 202-332-2275 x205 or rgrant@theconsumervoices.org, if our organization could be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Sarah Wells
Executive Director



Robyn Grant
Director of Public Policy & Advocacy

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit membership organization founded in 1975 by Elma L. Holder that advocates for quality care and quality of life for consumers in all long-term-care settings.

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW • Suite 425 • Washington, DC 20036