



The National
CONSUMER VOICE
for Quality Long-Term Care



DIGNITY FOR ALL

Resident Voices on How
Staffing Impacts Their Lives

March 23, 2023

About the Consumer Voice

The leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care

- ▶ **Advocate for public policies** that support quality of care and quality of life responsive to consumers' needs in all long-term care settings.
- ▶ **Empower and educate** consumers and families with the knowledge and tools they need to advocate for themselves.
- ▶ **Train and support** individuals and groups that empower and advocate for consumers of long-term care.
- ▶ **Promote the critical role** of direct-care workers and best practices in quality care delivery.

Welcome

- ▶ The program is being **recorded**
- ▶ Use the **chat feature** to submit comments
- ▶ Please complete the **evaluation** questionnaire when the webinar is over
- ▶ Links to **resources** will be posted in the chat box and will be posted to the Consumer Voice website – theconsumervoice.org

Consumer Voice Staffing Resources

Staffing Matters

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On February 28, 2022, President Biden announced a set of [nursing home reforms](#) that would be the most significant increase in protections for nursing home residents in decades. The cornerstone of his plan is to create a federal minimum staffing standard. Currently, federal regulations only require facilities to have "sufficient staff" to meet residents' needs. This vague and ambiguous standard results in states and individual facilities adopting their own requirements, leading to inequity in nursing home care. A baseline standard is needed.

In 2001, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released a landmark report¹ which identified a specific minimum staffing threshold below which quality of care would be compromised. This minimum standard is 4.1 hours of total direct care per resident per day (hours per resident per day - hprd). CMS failed to implement this standard.

Overall Staffing Levels Make a Difference

Studies have repeatedly shown that nursing homes with higher staffing levels provide better care to residents.² Data³ from CMS reveals that nursing homes with higher averages of nursing care per day have higher overall ratings, better health inspection (HI) ratings, and fewer instances of abuse.⁴

Nursing Homes with Higher Staffing Levels Have Higher Ratings

Avg Staffing Hours	Average Overall Rating	Average Health Inspection Rating	Average Staffing Rating
4.1 or >	4.0	4.0	4.0
3.5-4.1	3.5	3.5	3.5
3.0-3.5	3.0	3.0	3.0
2.5-3.0	2.5	2.5	2.5
2.0-2.5	2.0	2.0	2.0

As average daily staffing decreases, so does a facility's overall rating and performance in health inspections, and instances of abuse rise.

¹ Abt Associates for U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, "Appropriateness of Minimum Nurse Staffing Ratios in Nursing Homes," December 2001.
² Bostick, J.E., Rantz, M.J., Fleener, M.K. and Riggs, C.J. (2006). Systematic review of studies of staffing and quality in nursing homes. J. Am. Med. Dir. Assoc. 7:366-376.
³ CMS provides staffing data for weekdays and weekends. The data in the paper is for weekdays only. An appendix at the end of this report provides the data for these charts.
⁴ On CMS' website [Care Compare](#), each nursing home is assigned a rating based on a 5-star rating system. The overall star rating is based on 5-star ratings in staffing, health inspections, and quality measures. Staffing ratings are based on payroll data submitted by facilities to CMS. Health inspection ratings are based upon annual and complaint surveys conducted by state agencies. The quality measure rating is based on short-stay and long-term measures reported by facilities to CMS. For more information on these ratings, go [here](#). CMS assigns an abuse tag on Care Compare to nursing homes previously cited for abuse.

<https://theconsumervoice.org/upload/files/issues/Staffing-Matters.pdf>

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ISSUE BRIEF

Why Nursing Homes Need a Minimum Staffing Standard

In April 2022, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced it was beginning the process of implementing a minimum staffing standard for nursing facilities.¹ This standard would require nursing homes to have enough staff to provide each resident with a minimum amount of direct care each day. Since the announcement, CMS has undertaken a study to determine the standard and intends to publish proposed rules in early 2023. When implemented, this standard will be the most significant increase in protections for nursing homes in decades.

Why Staffing Matters

Staffing nursing homes adequately has multiple benefits to residents. Numerous studies have found that there is a correlation between higher staffing levels and improved care quality.¹ Increased staffing levels also led to fewer deaths from COVID-19.² Poorly staffed nursing homes are more likely to be cited for abuse,³ have worse health inspections, and have lower overall five-star ratings than adequately staffed nursing homes.⁴

What is the staffing standard now?

Currently, the federal regulations require that nursing homes have "sufficient staff" to provide nursing and related services to assure resident safety and that each resident can attain or maintain their highest practicable level of well-being.⁵ This "sufficiency" standard has proven to be too opaque and has resulted in a wide variation in how each facility is staffed and how much care each resident receives.

What should the staffing standard be?

A 2001 CMS study found that nursing home residents require 4.1 hours per resident day (hprd) of direct nursing care to avoid being at an increased risk of harm.⁶ The study found that every day residents need, at a minimum, .75 hours of care performed by an Registered Nurse (RN), .55 hours of care performed by a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), and the remaining 2.8 hours of care to be performed by a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).⁶ Other studies show a correlational relationship between inadequate staffing and lower quality of care.⁸ Further, a Consumer Voice report found that nursing homes adhering to the 4.1 or greater hprd level made up the vast majority of the most highly rated homes.⁹

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http://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/issues/The_Importance_of_a_Minimum_Staffing_Standard.pdf

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HIGH STAFF TURNOVER: A JOB QUALITY CRISIS IN NURSING HOMES

In January 2022, the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) began posting the nursing staff turnover rates for nursing homes on its Care Compare website. The new measure provides the percentage of direct care nursing staff that leave their jobs over a twelve-month period. The new data revealed nursing homes, on average, experienced turnover of 52% of nursing staff each year. In other words, the average nursing facility has to replace half of its direct care staff each year.

These dismal numbers come at a time where the nursing home industry claims it is in the midst of a staffing crisis, unable to find workers to fill jobs. These turnover numbers, however, tell a different story—one of poor job quality. Numerous studies have shown that nursing turnover is related to poor pay, lack of benefits, high workloads, inadequate training, poor management, and lack of career advancement.¹

Most importantly, high turnover means poorer health outcomes for nursing home residents. A recent study directly connects high turnover with poor care.² A review of CMS data shows that nursing homes with higher turnover have higher instances of resident abuse, poorer Medicare five-star ratings, and greater numbers of substantiated resident complaints.

This report examines how nursing homes with higher staff turnover perform poorly in a variety of measures, how staff turnover harms residents, the causes of high turnover, and offers solutions to this endemic problem.

High Staff Turnover Harms Residents

CMS Nursing Home Care Compare website provides a variety of measures that consumers may use to gauge the performance of nursing homes. CMS uses data to generate five-star ratings that it reports on the website. The data used comes from health inspections, payroll staffing information, select clinical measures reported from nursing homes, and from Medicare claims data. CMS also informs consumers whether a nursing home has been cited for abuse. Additional data includes the number of resident complaints substantiated by state enforcement agencies.

HIGH STAFF TURNOVER: A JOB QUALITY CRISIS IN NURSING HOMES, 9/8/2022 | 1

https://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/issues/High_Staff_Turnover-A_Job_Quality_Crisis_in_Nursing_Homes.pdf

Dignity for All Webpage

[← Back to Current Event Listings](#)

Dignity for All: Staffing Standards Now!

February 23, 2023 - April 20, 2023



This month marks the one-year anniversary of President Biden's **announcement of historic nursing home reforms**. Creating a minimum staffing standard, which would be the most significant increase in protections for nursing home residents in decades, was central to his plan. Since his announcement, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has embarked on a study to determine the minimum level of direct nursing care all residents need and has promised to propose a standard this spring.

The nursing home industry's opposition to a minimum staffing standard has been fierce. The voices of residents and workers have been lost in the discussion. Over the next several months, Consumer Voice and resident advocates will center the discussion of minimum staffing standards on residents and workers by holding a series of events to uplift their voices. We must ensure that the primary focus of adequate staffing is on the residents and workers!

Schedule of Events

February 23, 2023, 2:00pm ET
Dignity for All: Staffing Standards Benefit Residents and Workers

This webinar serves as the launch of our "Dignity for All: Staffing Standards Now!" campaign advocating for a minimum staffing standard in nursing homes. We discussed the importance of adequate staffing for residents' safety and health. We also featured the voices of residents and long-term care facility workers, who shared what it is like to live and work in a nursing home without adequate staffing.

[View the Webinar Recording and Slides»](#)

March 9, 2023, 2:00pm ET
Dignity for All: Quality Jobs, Quality Care

The implementation of a minimum staffing standard would not only protect nursing home residents it would address the long-standing job quality problems that plague nursing homes. On average, nursing home staff turnover is 52% each year, which is the result of low-wages, poor benefits, inadequate training, and little opportunity for job growth. The burden of providing essential and critical care falls largely on women, a majority of whom are women of color, while they are treated poorly by nursing home owners and operators. Consumer Voice will be holding a discussion with members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) as we discuss what it is like to work in an understaffed facility and what a minimum staffing standard would mean to direct care staff in nursing homes.

[Register](#)

▶ <https://theconsumervoice.org/events/dignity-for-all-staffing-standards-now>

Dignity for All: Increase Scrutiny of Nursing Home Finances



April 6, 2023, 2:00pm ET

Speakers: Ernie Tosh, Sam Brooks