

2023-24 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- #5 Strengthen long-term care staffing standards.**
In nursing homes, NC mandates minimum staffing standards for RNs and LPNs. For Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), there are no staffing standards, resulting in a strong likelihood of substandard care of frail elders.

The Background

- Federal law requires Medicare and Medicaid certified nursing homes to have a registered nurse (RN) on duty at least 8 hours a day, 7 days a week; and a licensed nurse (RN or licensed practical nurse) on duty 24 hours a day. However, there are no minimum staffing levels for nurse's aides, who provide most of the day-to-day care.
- In a nursing home, the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) is the true point person when it comes to providing adequate one-on-one care to the resident. They implement bathing, toileting, grooming, feeding, and all other personal care functions for the resident.
- Considering minimal national requirements, most states require staffing above the federal standards.

The Issues

- While there are federal nursing home staffing standards, North Carolina is not among states which require staffing above federal minimum requirements.
- Quality of care is directly related to the adequacy, competence and stability of the direct care workforce.
- With the absence of defined staffing standards, North Carolina ranks 43rd nationally in hours of care provided daily to nursing home residents.

The Solution

North Carolina should establish nursing home patient-to-staff ratios for certified nurse assistants that supports a quality standard of care for residents in these facilities.