

October 6, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Katherine Clark  
Assistant Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Democratic Caucus Chair  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn  
Majority Whip  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Majority Whip Clyburn, Assistant Speaker Clark, and Democratic Caucus Chair Jeffries,

We write on behalf of administrators and nurse leaders in thousands of long-term and post-acute settings across the country. These leaders are struggling with unprecedented workforce challenges, and we write to urge your support to continue to ensure the availability of quality skilled care for patients in these facilities.

Nurses, Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) and other long-term and post-acute care staff have struggled throughout the COVID-19 health emergency with scarce resources, long hours, and inadequate compensation. Many of their colleagues have left their jobs due to burnout caused by stress and workload. Many more say they plan to leave in the coming months. A 2021 AAPACN survey found that 37% of directors of nursing service respondents changed their job in the last 12 months and 40% intend to change their job within the next 12 months. In addition, nurse assessment coordinators (NACs) reported the most challenging aspect of their job is staff shortage, with 59% rating this as considerably or substantially challenging. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of NAC respondents who rated staff shortage and/or workload as considerably or substantially impacting their job also plan on changing jobs in the next 12 months.

Administrators are not immune from the burdens of stress and workload. A 2021 McKnight's *Long-Term Care News* Mood of the Market Survey found that 48%+ of the administrators responding said they were considering or more likely to leave the profession. The administrator and director of nursing roles have historically worked together to address their communities' workforce issues, providing needed leadership to assure their teams are supported and their elders are well-cared for. With these unprecedented shortages, it's not surprising to see such high rates of turnover and burnout. Without some additional intervention, the entire industry is at risk.

While Congress has previously supported the skilled nursing industry with significant additional resources during the response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, there is much more to be done. We urge you to quickly approve pending legislative provisions to support staffing in long-term and post-acute care settings. The need is critical and timely action is needed before Congress adjourns this year.

Of greatest importance is the *Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act of 2021* (HR 5169 / S 2694) which would, among other important provisions, increase state-level Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP). Section 206, Enhanced Funding to Support Staffing and Quality Care in Nursing Facilities, would provide states with a temporary enhanced federal Medicaid match to allow nursing homes to improve wages and benefits for six years to expand and improve nursing facility staffing. Specifically, this legislation allows states to receive a three-percentage point increase to their federal match for four years, two-point increase for one year, and a one-point increase in the final year. AAPACN and ACHCA urge urgent passage of this legislation.

Additionally, the *Nursing Home Workforce Support and Accountability Act* (HR 5094 / S 2674) would fund grants to states based on the number of adults over 65 and individuals with disabilities. These state grants are designed to support employee wage subsidies, student loan repayment or tuition assistance, and childcare and transportation cost assistance to eligible workers. States could also use the funding to establish a reserve fund for emergency financial assistance, provide in-kind resource donations, provide assistance with activities designed to lower barriers to employment and support eligible employers in offering not less than two weeks of paid leave per year. AAPACN and ACHCA urge urgent passage of this legislation.

Finally, several components of the reconciliation legislation are of particular importance to long-term and post-acute care staff. We would like to highlight provisions of the various House committee packages that we believe to be particularly impactful to meet the critical and pressing needs facing older adults and the skilled nursing industry:

*Included in the House Ways & Means Committee package:*

- Allocate \$392 million for Nursing Home Worker Training Grants to addressing staff shortages in long-term care facilities specifically for long-term care workforce recruitment, wage subsidies, paid leave and childcare.
- Allocate \$425 million to expand the Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) Program, which would allow skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and nonprofit organizations to train low-income recipients for in-demand allied health positions.
- Improve the accuracy and reliability of the data collected in SNFs by requiring a study on the appropriateness of minimum staff to resident ratios of registered nurses and recommendations for minimum staffing ratios for certified nursing assistants and nurses

*Included in the Committee on Education and Labor reconciliation bill:*

- Provide \$1.48 billion in renewable three-year grants to recruit, retain, and advance the direct care workforce; implement models and strategies to make the field of direct care more

attractive; and improve wages, including through training and registered apprenticeships, career pathways, or mentoring.

- Provide \$5 million to establish a Technical Assistance Center for supporting direct care and caregiving, through the Administration for Community Living. The Technical Assistance Center will develop and disseminate evidence-based strategies for recruitment, education and training, retention, and career advancement of direct care workers and provide recommendations for activities to further support paid and unpaid family caregivers.

The American Association of Post-Acute Care Nursing (AAPACN) is a professional association representing more than 18,000 long-term and post-acute care nurses across the country. AAPACN is dedicated to supporting nurses and other health care professionals by providing education, certification, and resources to foster strong, collaborative communities. AAPACN's programs and initiatives support and drive high-quality care in long-term and post-acute care (LTPAC) settings.

Founded in 1962, the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) is the only professional association devoted solely to meeting the professional needs of today's post-acute and aging services leaders. Focused on advancing leadership excellence, ACHCA provides professional education and certification to administrators from across the spectrum of long-term care. For more information about ACHCA, contact the national office at (800) 561-3148 or visit [www.achca.org](http://www.achca.org).

Sincerely,



Tracey Moorhead  
President & CEO  
American Association of Post-Acute Care Nursing



Bob Lane, CNHA, FACHCA  
President & CEO  
American College of Health Care Administrators