



NURSING HOME STAFFING IN PENNSYLVANIA:

Why Prescriptive Requirements Miss the Mark

Staffing Challenge in a Growing Aging Population

Pennsylvania's aging population is continuing to grow, increasing the demand for long-term care services. While intended to ensure high-quality aging services, these prescriptive rules are creating unintended consequences, proving to actually reduce quality and increase staff turnover and burnout.

TODAY:

2.4 million
residents
aged 65+



2030:



1 in 3 Residents
Over Age 60

Creating More Problems Than Solutions

Mandated per-shift ratios strain already burdened providers rather than improving care.



Reduced Admissions

Providers are forced to limit new admissions, restricting access to care.



Resource Strain

Reallocating resources to meet arbitrary requirements often hurts person-centered resident benefits and programs.



Burnout and Turnover

Increased pressure is worsening the staffing crisis.

Prescriptive per-shift ratios limit the ability of caring providers to allocate limited resources in the way that best meets their unique residents' needs.

Penalized for Factors Beyond Their Control



WIDESPREAD WORKER SHORTAGES

Struggling to fill essential roles with qualified workers

LAST-MINUTE CALL-OFFS

Making adjustments, moving around staff, and impacting operations

COSTLY STAFFING AGENCIES

Temporary staffing agencies profiting off of the crisis by charging unrealistically high rates, exacerbating the crisis

CARE ACROSS THE CONTINUUM

How Health Care Workforce Shortages Affect Pennsylvanians' Access to Care



Scan to view the
2025 survey



SUPPORTING WORKFORCE LEGISLATION

To tackle the urgent shortage of direct care workers in Pennsylvania and eliminate barriers for entry, a set of workforce-focused bills seeks to update training requirements, broaden access to caregiving careers, and encourage early engagement with long-term care professions. These practical reforms will contribute to creating a stronger, more sustainable workforce to address the demands of Pennsylvania's increasing aging population.

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Training Reform

Senate Bill 114

Introduced by Sen. David Argall



Passed by the full Senate and awaits third consideration by the House Professional Licensure Committee.



- Allows nursing students and graduates to qualify for the CNA exam with needed experience, standardizes curriculum and competency testing statewide, and ensures timely program approvals by the PA Dept. of Education, among other needed reforms.

Skill Competency in Lieu of HSD or GED

Senate Bill 115

Introduced by Sen. David Argall



Passed by the full Senate and awaits consideration by the House Human Services Committee.



- Allows Direct Care Workers (DCWs) in personal care and assisted living to take an alternative competency exam to demonstrate their skills, as some skilled caregivers lack a high school diploma (HSD) or GED or access to these documents.

Graduation Credits for High School Employment in Long-Term Care

Senate Bill 116

Introduced by Sen. David Argall



Awaits consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

- Enables high school juniors and seniors to earn up to two credits toward graduation for working, either paid or volunteer, in long-term care settings.