

2026 State of PA Nursing Homes Report

About the Survey

LeadingAge PA surveyed Nursing Home members January 5-30, 2026, using the web-based survey tool, Alchemer. **123 responses were submitted for a 72% response rate.** This represents approximately 20% of all nursing homes in Pennsylvania.

99%
Not-for-profit
owned

79% of respondents serve a
Medicaid-eligible population
with an average
Medicaid census of **46%**

11,602
certified nursing home
beds represented

Access to Care

Statewide data from CMS is clear: since 2020, **at least 37 nursing homes have closed** and **4,318 beds have been de-certified** (or permanently taken off the market) in Pennsylvania. Why? Chronic Medicaid underfunding has been undercutting the sector for over a decade, the pandemic hit long-term care especially hard, and overly-prescriptive state staffing ratios were implemented shortly thereafter. Meanwhile, the **85+ population is expected to nearly triple by 2050.**



37 fewer
nursing homes



4,318 fewer
beds available



3x more
individuals
age 85+

Over the past year,

10% of respondents have permanently de-licensed nursing home beds.

29% of respondents have licensed beds "offline" or intentionally unfilled.



Top 3 reasons for reducing the number of individuals their organization can serve:

1. Inadequate Funding

"Medicaid and other insurances do not reimburse appropriately for the level of care we provide"

"Inadequacy of third-party reimbursement"

"We're not taking as many long-term care admissions due to the county medical assistance office taking over a year to process applications and we can't take care of a resident for over a year without being paid."

2. Workforce Shortages

"Unavailability of staff to meet the staffing ratios requirements"

"Due to PA staffing ratios - not feasible to hire additional nurse for 11-7 to maintain required nurse to resident ratio"

"Lack of staffing; unable to sustain agency costs"

3. Consumer Preference Adjustments

"We converted rooms from semi to private to meet residents request."

"In process of transitioning to Assisted Living"

IMPACT ON HOSPITALS

49%

Nearly half of respondents reported having to decline admission referrals from hospitals within the past 90 days.



1 in 5 providers reported limiting or denying admissions specifically as a result of **state staffing ratio requirements**.

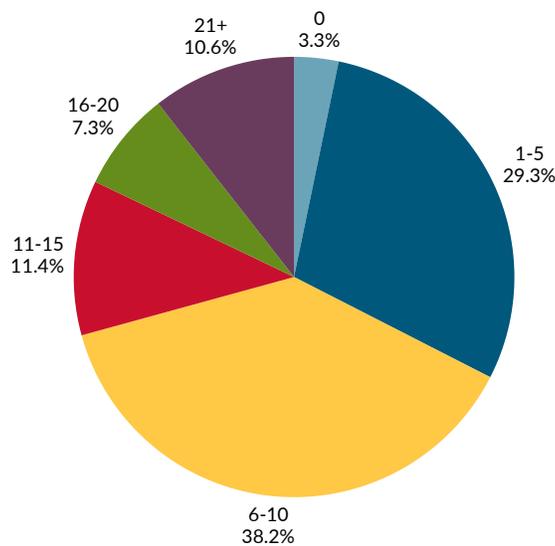
Workforce

The ability to recruit and retain a qualified workforce in long-term care continues to be a significant challenge that impacts the ability to care for the growing senior population in Pennsylvania. Overly prescriptive state staffing requirements have made the situation even more challenging.

How many direct care staff positions (CNA, LPN, RN) do you currently have vacant?

68% report more than 5 open direct care positions

Number of direct care positions reported open by each respondent:

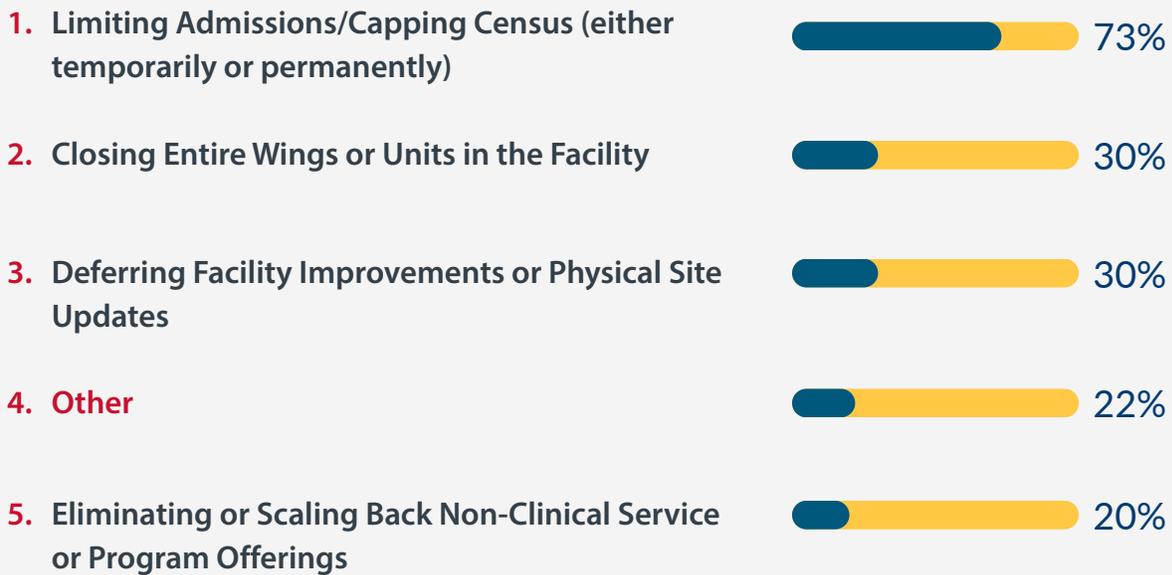


What are the most common barriers your community is facing to employing staff (top three reasons ranked)?

- 1. Lack of Qualified Individuals (including certifications and degrees)**
- 2. Wages: Inability to Offer Competitive Wages/Benefits due to Financial Constraints**
- 3. Scheduling Constraints (e.g., unwillingness to work certain shifts/hours)**



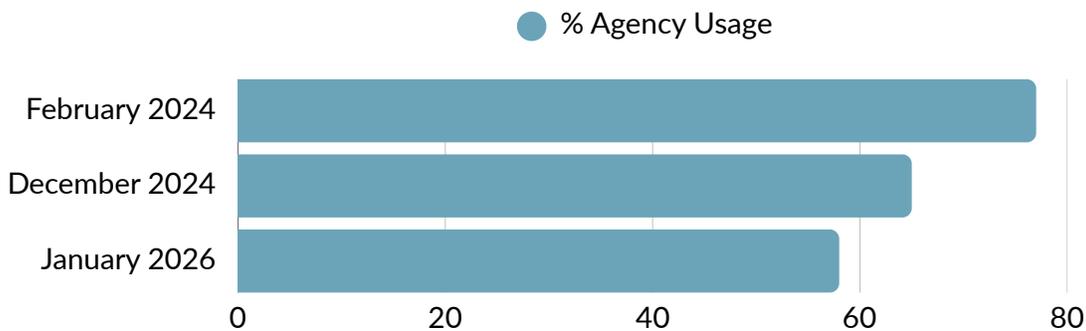
How have workforce shortages affected resident services and operations at your community over the last 3 years? (select all that apply)



“Other” responses included:

- Burn out due to overtime and administrative/professional nursing staff filling in to cover missing shifts in addition to their regular duties
- Dependency on costly Temporary Agency Staff that negatively impact quality of care

AGENCY USE REMAINS A CHALLENGE



Over half of respondents still must rely on temporary staffing agencies, with nearly a third having to rely on agency staff to cover 10% or more of their daily direct care staffing needs.

Funding

The impact on low-income seniors is the starkest, with Medicaid supporting 70% of nursing home residents in Pennsylvania, yet reimbursement rates fail to cover the true costs of care.

After not receiving a funding increase in last year's state budget,

46% of respondents reported that they will be **unable to increase wages** for staff despite wanting to.

33% reported that they would need to **cut back on ancillary/non-direct care services**

25% reported that they will need to **budget for a lower census**

Additional negative impacts included having to **increase rates for residents who pay privately** and **accept fewer (or no) Medicaid residents**.



“We cannot afford to take care of Medicaid [residents] and are considering shutting down our skilled nursing services despite the fact that we are one of the most highly sought after facilities”

-Nursing Home operator in Montgomery County

“It's nearly impossible to develop a revenue budget with any type of accuracy as rates/BAF constantly fluctuate”

- Nursing Home operator in York County



Medical Assistance/Medicaid (MA) Pending delays are an ongoing struggle for providers.

This refers to the time it takes the county assistance offices (CAOs) to process Medicaid eligibility applications, during which time, nursing homes are not being paid for the care they are providing to individuals in need. This issue varies by county with wait times reportedly stretching past the 45-day requirement to anywhere between 6 and **36 months!**

51% Over half reported experiencing delays in processing MA Pending applications.

Providers explained how MA Pending delays impact their community:



"This process is taking anywhere from 9 months to 18 months, and on occasion longer. During this time, the facility receives NO payments for care. The most challenging is when the case worker doesn't know what to do, so the case just sits on their desk. For example, we have one now that goes back to May 2024. We have filed 5 appeals in this case alone."

- Executive Director in Allegheny County

"It's taking 3 months in our area to get an approval. There is no assigned caseworker... Email return responses are not prompt, severely delayed; The local CAO was closed and moved over 100 miles away. No direct caseworker assigned to new or previous claims. Mail is slow or gets lost. Emails go unanswered for a length of time."

-Nursing Home Administrator in Cameron County



The Bottom Line

"The continued lack of government support for aging services is beyond wrong. It is a true demonstration of ageism at its finest. The people we serve deserve the respect and honor to receive excellent care, no matter their financial means."

-Nursing Home Administrator in Centre County

For more information, contact GovAffairs@LeadingAgePA.org
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