

# Safe Staffing Saves Lives Act

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**Supporting Organizations:** AFL-CIO, SEIU, AFSCME, National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Justice in Aging, Public Citizen, Long Term Care Community Coalition

For decades, researchers have clearly established a link between higher staffing levels and improvements in the safety and quality of care delivered to nursing home residents. [Higher staffing levels result in lower mortality rates, fewer rehospitalizations and emergency room visits](#), as well as [reduced incidents of infections, pressure ulcers, weight loss, and dehydration](#). Strong staffing standards also [promote resident independence](#) as patients receive adequate training and assistance to improve activities of daily living. Finally, nursing homes with higher staffing levels have [fewer deficiencies cited](#).

Recognizing the importance of staffing to assuring long-term health and safety of residents, the Biden Administration implemented minimum standards that Trump outrageously repealed at the behest of nursing home executives who [donated to his campaign](#). Meanwhile, his draconian immigration policies and ICE abuses are [harming the care workforce](#), including the killing of Alex Pretti, a VA nurse in Minneapolis, and his “Big Beautiful Bill” enacted the largest health care cut in U.S. history—[cuts expected to trigger nursing home closures](#).

Minimum staffing standards improve care without triggering facility closures. A new study found that 6,900 facilities in 22 states with [minimum staffing requirements increased net patient revenues](#) by twice the amount of additional labor costs.

Yet, a recent poll found the majority of U.S. adults are reluctant to admit a relative to a nursing home, giving nursing homes an [overall quality grade of D+](#). Families’ top concern is nursing quality (70%), demonstrating strong public desire for strong safe staffing standards. But for many, nursing homes remain a vital component of our health care system for families seeking long-term care for their loved ones. And with an aging population and many living longer, nursing homes will become increasingly important. The population of adults age 65 and older is projected to grow by about 30 million people by 2060, with the population age 85 and older nearly tripling. Safely staffed nursing homes are essential to assuring the health, safety, and dignity of all Americans.

## **The Safe Staffing Saves Lives Act would:**

- Require a minimum of 4.1 hours of direct care per resident per day, which shall include a minimum of:
  - 1.3 hours of direct licensed nursing care per day, including a minimum of:
    - 0.75 hours of registered nurse care per day
    - 0.55 hours of licensed practical nurse care per day
  - 2.8 hours of certified nursing assistant care per day
- Require an on-site registered nurse 24/7

- Establishes a 180-day waiver, which may be renewed, for facilities demonstrating they cannot reasonably comply with a minimum staffing requirement. To be considered for a waiver, facilities must submit:
  - Workforce and wage data for the geographic area
  - Additional employee benefits offered by the facility
  - Annual rate of nursing staff turnover at the facility, disaggregated by category of staff
  - Evidence of the facility's demonstrated commitment to hiring nursing staff
- State long-term care ombudsman shall receive notice of any facility receiving a waiver.
- Facilities are ineligible for a waiver if:
  - The facility is under the Special Focus Facility Program
  - In the preceding year the facility was found to have a deficiency that resulted in harm to a resident or jeopardized the health or safety of its residents
- Establishes penalties for facilities that do not meet the minimum standards, which include:
  - Increased surveys every 3 months
  - Denial of federal payments for any newly admitted residents
  - Ineligibility for Skilled Nursing Facility Value-Based Payment Program
  - Prohibition on transfer or discharge of residents solely for the purpose of meeting the minimum staffing requirement
  - Nothing in this legislation prevents CMS from imposing additional available penalties
- Facilities are required to notify residents and guardians of any finding that they have failed to meet the minimum staffing requirements. Facilities must also post physical notices in the facility. Notices of waivers and noncompliance shall also be posted on CMS's Care Compare website.
- Penalties shall be rescinded when a facility is found to be in compliance with the minimum staffing requirements.
- Nothing in this legislation prevents states from establishing stronger minimum staffing standards.
- Nothing in this legislation prevents CMS from establishing stronger minimum staffing standards under the Nursing Home Reform Act of 1987.