



May 2, 2024

Honorable Joseph Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of LeadingAge's more than 5,400 nonprofit provider members serving older adults in nursing homes and other care settings, I am writing to express my deep dismay over and concern about your Administration's mischaracterization of nursing home providers and repeated incendiary descriptions of care delivered in nursing homes.

The most recent example occurred just last week, when the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on April 22 released its final rule, Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care Facilities and Medicaid Institutional Payment Transparency Reporting. At a roundtable [meeting with nursing home care workers in LaCrosse, WI](#), Vice President Harris characterized care provided in nursing homes as neglectful—no one to help residents when they fall, comfort them when lonely, or serve them meals on time—and suggested widespread disregard by nursing home management for the staff who do the lion's share of the direct care work: "it is about time to recognize care workers' value," she said.

On this we agree. We also agree that poor resident care and indifference to staff needs should not be tolerated. However, for the Vice President to suggest that both are regular occurrences in nursing homes is grossly misleading. There are more than 15,000 nursing homes in the country, and they are not all the same.

Which is why the White House's resurfacing of all-nursing-homes-as-bad-actors messaging, [used in February 2022](#) and now in the final rule's April 22 ["Fact Sheet"](#), and framing of the sector as harmful to older adults and in need of a crackdown is troubling.

To be clear: bad actors must be stopped—and, as you know, nursing homes must follow federal and state requirements to protect residents' health and safety and to ensure the proper use of funds derived from taxpayer dollars; surely, federal and state regulators and inspectors would not allow rampant managerial misdeeds and harm throughout the sector. What's more, over one-third of homes are high performers, based on scores derived from the government's own measures. Again, not all nursing homes are the same.

Our members take seriously their responsibility to residents, families, the broader community -- as well as to state and federal regulators. Since the 2022 release of your Action Plan for Nursing Home Reform, we have repeatedly expressed our alignment with your position: ensuring older adults and families can receive quality care in nursing homes is a shared goal. We know, as you do, that quality care and staffing are tightly connected.

Notwithstanding nonprofits' consistent outperformance on staffing measures when compared to the entire sector—despite chronic workforce challenges resulting from underfunding of America's long-term care system—as we have explained since the staffing mandate was proposed in 2023, our members will struggle mightily to comply.

It is a simple issue of supply and expenses. These new minimum staffing requirements, which come with no additional funds for recruitment, training, or support for increases in Medicaid reimbursement (the main source of nursing homes' funding), will likely result in unintended consequences. Older adults' and families' existing difficulties in accessing care will worsen. Already, staffing shortages have resulted in nursing homes placing holds on beds, closing wings, limiting admissions or—worse yet—shuttering entirely.

This is no time to mislead the public and discourage potential employees from joining our ranks. Without the nurse aides, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and other professional caregivers who serve nursing home residents, there is no care. And now, with the regulatory clock ticking on provider compliance, your Administration's inaccurate framing of all providers and our sector threatens to undermine efforts—including the \$75 million recruitment campaign promised by CMS to encourage more nurses to work in nursing homes—to achieve the shared goal of bringing new staff to the field.

I urge you to change your approach. Rather than disparage us, partner with us. Visit our communities, meet the staff and leaders who work hard every day to ensure the health and well-being of their residents. Witness, first-hand, the innovations they've developed to navigate their workforce challenges. Hear what needs to be done to solve them. Work with Congress on policy solutions, from streamlining care worker immigration pipelines to expanding learning and pathway opportunities. There's much to be done. Let's work together to build a stronger and enticing pathway to aging services for nurses and nursing assistants.

Sincerely,  
Katie Smith Sloan

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Smith Sloan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President and CEO  
LeadingAge

Electronic cc: Neera Tanden, Domestic Policy Advisor, White House