

# BETTER CARE NOW

I SUPPORT  
NURSING HOME  
SAFE STAFFING

## Improving Care, Improving Work

On Sept. 1, the Biden administration proposed the first-ever minimum staffing standards for nursing facilities that participate in Medicaid and Medicare. This historic development will improve care for the more than 1.1 million people per year who rely on nursing homes for care; it will improve working conditions for the more than 4.2 million direct care staff.

The proposed regulation is an important first step in ensuring quality care and jobs. It would **increase staffing** in 75% of the nation's nursing homes and **result in more than 90,000 new nurse and nurse assistant jobs** nationwide.

The proposed rule would address missed care and dangerous working conditions in the most understaffed facilities. This rule is just the beginning, and through our collective efforts we can increase the staffing requirement further to ensure missed care and dangerous working conditions are addressed in all facilities.

### WHY STAFFING MATTERS

- Nursing homes long have suffered from substandard care due to poor staffing. Today, more than 70% of nursing homes staff below the level experts have determined is necessary to avoid harm to residents.
- Increasing overall nurse staffing has been one of the most consistent recommendations for improving the quality of care in nursing homes. More than 150 studies over decades have documented the strong positive impact of additional nurse staffing on the care process and outcome measures.

**Take Action Now!**




**BetterCareNow.us**

- Higher staffing levels are associated with meaningfully better care: fewer pressure ulcers, infections, hospital visits and reduced mortality. Nursing homes with higher staffing rates have had fewer COVID-19 cases and deaths than those with lower staffing levels.

## MAKING CARE JOBS BETTER JOBS

- Improving staffing in nursing homes also means improving job quality for nursing home workers. Adequate staffing would ensure assistance in moving patients and time to sit with a resident in distress. It would mean fewer injuries on the job and less worker burnout.
- Every year, the average nursing home loses just more than half of its direct care staff—a much higher rate than hospitals, doctors' offices and other provider settings. The problem at nursing homes isn't hiring staff—it's keeping staff.
- High staff turnover impacts health outcomes for residents. Government data show that nursing homes with higher staff turnover have lower ratings, more health and safety violations, and more complaints of abuse.

## GENDER AND RACIAL INEQUITY

- Our health care system was shaped by discriminatory laws and a discriminatory culture that continue to have an impact today. More than 90% of nursing home workers are female, 58% are persons of color and 20% are immigrants; it is no accident that these workers are disproportionately in jobs with the lowest wages.
  - Approximately 12% of these workers live in poverty, and 41% live in what could be considered low-income households. Among Black and Latino female direct care workers, about 50% earn less than \$15 per hour.
  - A staffing standard will mean nursing homes will have to hire more nurses and nursing assistants. That will only be possible, however, if nursing homes offer a higher starting wage and better benefits. *This may be the single most impactful policy initiative this administration can undertake to address gender and racial inequality in the health care sector.*
  - The impact of a staffing standard will be widespread and have an intergenerational effect. Nearly one in three nursing assistants has a child younger than age 18 living at home, and one in six has one or more children younger than age 5. Raising the wages of these workers and giving them more hours will improve the economic prospects of the whole family.
  - Better staffing will address inequities for residents of nursing homes, too. Staffing is lower at facilities with a higher percentage of Black and Latino residents, which adds to differences in health outcomes.
- 

## NEXT STEPS

- This rule making is a once-in-decade opportunity to set national staffing standards, but it faces tremendous opposition from the nursing home industry, which will flood the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) with negative comments.
- The rule will be improved and finalized only if the administration hears from working families and people who care about improving the quality of care and the quality of jobs in nursing homes.
- Please spread the word about this landmark policy change—and submit comments and stories to HHS in support of a strong national staffing standard. Visit [BetterCareNow.us](https://www.bettercarenow.us) to have your voice heard by Nov. 6.

