

October 24, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries,

We, the undersigned faith-based and mission-driven organizations, write to request that you prioritize the *Ensuring Seniors' Access to Quality Care Act* (H.R. 8244) for House Floor consideration and inclusion in an end-of-year legislative package.

This bipartisan bill, introduced by Representatives Ron Estes (R-KS) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA), would address an outdated provision in federal law that is hindering nursing homes from training the Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) they desperately need.

CNAs are vital to the day-to-day operations of nursing homes, and the new federal nursing home minimum staffing rule will require facilities to significantly increase their CNA staff. In fact, we estimate that to meet these federal requirements, nursing homes will need to hire over 78,000 additional full-time CNAs. While non-profit, faith-based, and mission-driven organizations have rich histories, deep roots in their communities, and are generally better staffed, we will need to double down on training new staff to meet the coming demand.

Regrettably, for nearly 40 years, nursing homes that have been fined above a specific monetary threshold have automatically lost the authority to train CNAs for a full two years, regardless of whether the fine was related to the quality of resident care. In many cases, fines result from factors outside the facility's control, yet the suspension of their CNA training programs can further exacerbate staffing challenges.

The *Ensuring Seniors' Access to Quality Care Act* would address this issue by allowing nursing homes that have resolved their compliance issues to continue their CNA training programs as long as their penalties are not related to the quality of care provided to residents. The bill would help secure and maintain a robust pipeline of trained CNAs who are essential to our nation's 1.2 million nursing home residents. As the population of Americans over 65 grows, so too will the need for trained CNAs.

H.R. 8244 has been considered and passed by the House Ways and Means Committee, and an identical companion measure (H.R. 3227) has been considered and passed by the House Energy and Commerce Committee. This legislation provides a common-sense solution that would allow nursing homes to focus on meeting the new staffing requirements while continuing to provide high-quality care to our most vulnerable citizens. We urge you to prioritize this important legislation and include it in a year-end legislative package.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Todd Adams, Director of Health Legislative Affairs with LeadingAge, at TAdams@LeadingAge.org.

Sincerely,

Association of Jewish Aging Services
Catholic Charities USA
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Council for Health & Human Service Ministries
Friends Services Alliance
LeadingAge
Lutheran Services in America
Methodist Ministries Network
National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church
MHS Association
Presbyterian Association of Homes & Services for the Aging

About Our Organizations

Association of Jewish Aging Services (AJAS) is a unique association of not-for-profit community-based organizations, rooted in Jewish values, which promotes and supports the delivery of services to an aging population. Founded in 1960, AJAS serves 80 members across North America in the context of Jewish values through education, professional development, advocacy, and community relationships.

Catholic Charities USA (CCUSA) is a national membership organization representing more than 168 diocesan Catholic Charities agencies. These member agencies operate more than 3,000 service locations across 50 states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. The diverse array of social services offered by agencies reached more than 15 million individuals in need last year. These agencies help people, regardless of their faith, who are struggling with poverty and other complex issues. The collective efforts of the Catholic Charities network focus on housing, integrated health, hunger and nutrition, social enterprises and foundational services that make a difference in the lives of people in need.

Founded in 1915, the **Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA)** is the national leadership organization representing more than 2,200 Catholic healthcare systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, clinics, service providers, and organizations. The Catholic health ministry is the largest group of nonprofit health care providers in the nation. Our members include some of the oldest nursing homes and hospices in the country and address the needs of older adults throughout their lives. Through partnerships with national aging and health care organizations, CHA is committed to building age-friendly health systems that ensure that older adults receive evidence-based care that meets their unique health care needs. For more information visit www.chausa.org.

The Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM) is committed to advancing the work of all health and human service ministries of the United Church of Christ (UCC) in creating a just, caring and compassionate world. Our 70-plus corporate members, all affiliated with the UCC, operate more than 400 communities and programs for children, youth, families, older adults and people with developmental disabilities. Together, we represent the largest component of the UCC's healing ministry; our organizations serve over three million people annually, have combined assets of more than \$16 billion, and provide more than \$1 billion in uncompensated charitable care each year. For more information visit www.chhsm.org.

Friends Services Alliance (FSA) is a national professional association of values-aligned organizations that serve seniors. We support both staff and governing boards of CCRCs/life plan communities, home care groups, foundations and others by providing a spectrum of professional services specifically designed for our industry. We have been doing so for more than 30 years. FSA's approach to working with both members and partners is rooted in our Quaker heritage. These values guide our work through a focus on best practices, the highest quality service, and the belief that all people shall be treated with dignity and respect.

LeadingAge represents more than 5,400 nonprofit and mission-driven aging services providers and other organizations that touch millions of lives every day. Alongside our members and 36 partners in 41 states, we use applied research, advocacy, education, and community-building to make America a better place to grow old. Our membership encompasses the continuum of services for people as they age, including those with disabilities. We bring together the most inventive minds in the field to lead and innovate solutions that support older adults wherever they call home. For more information visit leadingage.org.

Lutheran Services in America is one of the nation's largest faith-based national networks of health and human service providers with a mission to cultivate caring communities that advance health and opportunity for all. With 300 nonprofit organizations across 1,400 U.S. communities, and over \$26 billion in combined annual services, LSA's network advances equitable outcomes for children, youth and families; improves independence and choice for older adults; champions meaningful services and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and strengthens stability and purpose for veterans, refugees, New Americans and other special populations. Formed in 1997, LSA brings together a network of leaders, partners and funders to catalyze innovation, strengthen organizational capacity and advance public policy.

Methodist Ministries Network is a national association of ministries with their roots in Methodism and other Christian faiths. Our association serves about 70 members that own, operate or manage more than 450 faithful ministries across the country. Our membership includes ministries serving children, youth and families, seniors and people with developmental disabilities. The association serves as a catalyst for connecting and supporting our ministries.

MHS Association is a health and human services network of Anabaptist ministries across the United States and Puerto Rico. This 68-member Association represents senior living organizations such as retirement communities or stand-alone housing, physical and intellectual disability services, mental/behavioral health, addiction and counseling services, homeless programs, child welfare/foster care/adoption services, and a hospital system. As a network of Anabaptist organizations, we work to inspire unique collaborations and networks, promote our shared values through leadership and governance training and education programs, and provide faith-grounded strategic business tools and resources to advance each member's health and human services mission.

Presbyterian Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (PAHSA) is an independent, faith-based not for profit association representing organizations that provide residential communities, health care and services for older adults. Our members across the nation share Presbyterian roots, legacy and history. Through its service, programs and activities, PAHSA provides networking, resources and leadership development for our members. In turn, our member organizations strive to exemplify Christian values and fulfill the physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual needs of older adults, so that they may experience the fullest life possible. For more information visit www.pahsa.org.