

LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice

NURSING HOMES UNDERSTAFFED AT HEIGHT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

November 14, 2020 – Numerous studies have identified staffing as a strong predictor of resident outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Better staffing not only helps prevent and control infections but also protects residents from the devastating effects of neglect and isolation.

Today, LTCCC announces the [publication of the latest user-friendly data](#) on staffing for every U.S. nursing home (in compliance with mandatory reporting requirements). This information can help the public, news media, and policymakers identify and assess the extent to which nursing homes in their communities provided sufficient staffing to meet basic clinical and quality of life needs. The data are for the most recent period reported by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Unfortunately, the latest federal data indicate that most facilities were understaffed at the height of the pandemic (2nd quarter of 2020). Despite receiving billions of dollars in COVID relief aid, these data indicate that too many nursing homes failed to invest in staff to meet their residents' needs.

LTCCC's [Q2 2020 staffing report](#) provides easy-to-use files for every state that include: **1)** The levels of care staff that a facility has for its residents; **2)** Staffing levels for important non-nursing staff, including administrators and activities staff; and **3)** The extent to which the facility relies on contract workers to provide resident care.

Staffing Facts for Q2 2020:

- The national staffing averages for Q2 2020 are **3.46 total care staff hours per resident day (HPRD)** and **0.45 RN care staff HPRD**. These averages fall short of the amount of time needed to ensure that residents receive clinical care (**4.10 hours total care staff HPRD** and **0.75 RN HPRD**), according to a landmark 2001 federal study.
 - Facilities experienced a dramatic decrease in resident population since the start of the pandemic. The average facility census declined from **86.6 to 78.3 (9.6%)** from Q4 2019 to Q2 2020.
 - **The top five states for total staffing averages:** Alaska, North Dakota, Vermont, Hawaii, Oregon.
 - **The bottom five states for total staffing averages:** Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, Illinois, Indiana.
- **Note:** Nursing home facilities are prone to significant fluctuation in staffing and often have very low staffing on weekends and holidays. Though our report accounts for staffing fluctuations by averaging all observations, data on staffing for specific days can be found by searching for a nursing home in the CMS dataset, <https://data.cms.gov/Special-Programs-Initiatives-Long-Term-Care-Facili/PBJ-Daily-Nurse-Staffing-CY-2020Q2/ym5d-ceq8>.