

LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice

THREE IN FOUR U.S. NURSING HOMES UNDERSTAFFED IN SECOND WAVE

April 30, 2021 – Staffing levels have played a critical role in determining the health outcomes of nursing home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sufficiently staffed facilities are not only more prepared to stop the spread of COVID-19 and treat infected residents; they can also reduce loneliness and isolation by providing residents with the care and services that they need.

Today, LTCCC announces the [publication of the latest staffing data](#) for every U.S. nursing home (in compliance with mandatory reporting requirements) during the fourth quarter of 2020. The federal data indicate that **three in every four U.S. facilities failed to meet the minimum staffing threshold** (4.10 total care staff hours per resident day (HPRD), including 0.75 RN HPRD) indicated by a landmark 2001 federal study. Nationwide, nursing homes averaged **3.47 total care staff HPRD and 0.47 RN HPRD** in the quarter (Oct. 1 through Dec. 31) during the height of the pandemic.

LTCCC's [Q4 2020 staffing report](#) provides user-friendly files for every state that include: **1)** The levels of care staff; **2)** Staffing levels for important non-nursing staff, including administrators and activities staff; and **3)** Data indicating the extent to which facilities rely on contract workers. The report also includes data on state and national quarterly staffing levels, state and national quarterly resident census averages, and daily national resident census counts.

Staffing Facts for Q4 2020

- **Less than a quarter (22%) of U.S. nursing homes met the total care staff threshold (4.10 HPRD)** as determined by [the landmark federal study](#).
- Total care staff HPRD (3.47) increased only slightly from the previous quarter (3.43) **despite a drastic resident population decline** from COVID-related deaths.
- LTCCC analysis indicates that the moderate increase in staff HPRD is a result of the **steep population decline, NOT an increase in staff hours**.
- Total care staff HPRD **declined sharply on weekends and holidays**, dipping as low as 3.17 on Christmas.
- Nationwide, the **daily average facility resident census fell 4.8%** from Oct. 1 (75.8) to Dec. 31 (72.2). The Q4 2020 average facility census (74.3) is 14.2% below the pre-pandemic Q4 2019 average (86.6).

Note: Early in the pandemic, CMS relaxed the rules requiring that nursing home care staff must have, at minimum, nurse aide certification (which includes a 75-hour training minimum). Because CMS refused our request to require that facilities separately report data on Temporary Nurse Aides (TNAs), we do not know the extent to which inadequate staffing is exacerbated by reliance on aides with little training or experience.

LTCCC's Q4 2020 report can help the public, 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 report is based on the most recent payroll-based journal (PBJ) data reported by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). (See: [PBJ Daily Nurse Staffing](#) and [PBJ Daily Non-Nurse Staffing](#)). Visit the [Nursing Home 411 Data Center](#) for more information on staffing, five-star ratings, and other important nursing home data.