

LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice

NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATION FACT SHEET

The responsibilities of nursing home administrators have been defined in the federal code for over 30 years. Nursing home administrators have oversight and operational responsibilities including ensuring regulatory compliance with standards of care, supporting the rights of the nursing home residents, and maintaining financial accountability.¹

Note: Information below is directly quoted or paraphrased from the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), federal guidance, or other resources (see footnotes). Federal standards are applicable to all residents in licensed U.S. nursing homes, including short-term, long-term, private pay, Medicaid, Medicare, or privately insured.

Administration [42 C.F.R. § 483.70; F837]

A facility must be administered in a manner that enables it to use its resources effectively and efficiently to attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident.² Facilities must be licensed under applicable state and local law and must operate and provide services in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and codes, and with accepted professional standards and principles.

(d) Governing body – The facility must have a governing body, or designated persons functioning as a governing body, that is legally responsible for establishing and implementing policies regarding the management and operation of the facility.

The governing body appoints the **administrator** who is –

- i. Licensed by the state, where licensing is required;
- ii. Responsible for management of the facility; and
- iii. Reports to and is accountable to the governing body.

The facility must determine:

- i. A process and frequency by which the administrator reports to the governing body;
- ii. How the administrator is held accountable and reports information about the facility's management and operation; and
- iii. How the administrator and the governing body are involved with the facility wide assessment.

¹ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. *The National Imperative to Improve Nursing Home Quality: Honoring Our Commitment to Residents, Families, and Staff*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26526>.

² <https://www.ecfr.gov/compare/2024-05-10/to/2024-05-09/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-G/part-483/subpart-B/section-483.70>.

What Do the Experts Say About Nursing Home Administrators?

According to Nurse.org, administrators are “responsible for both administrative and clinical duties... [and] are centered around the state and federal regulatory guidelines to ensure that all compliances are met.”³

“Licensed nursing home administrators (NHA) and directors of nursing (DON) are the designated facility-level leaders in U.S. nursing homes, positioned to establish quality and safety structures/processes and influence the performance, job satisfaction, and retention of their nursing home workforce....”⁴

Resident-Centered Advocacy Tips to Improve Facility Administration

Note: When non-emergency issues arise in a nursing home, it is always best to address them as close to the resident as possible (i.e., with the resident’s direct care staff and the professional nursing staff that oversee them). Going “straight to the top” (i.e, to the administrator) can be counterproductive. However, when problems persist or are systemic, it may be useful to address them with administration.

- **Keep accurate records** of the concerns you raise about the care or services in your nursing home. This is easy to do with the [Resident Concern Record Keeping Form](#) and agendas for resident & family councils available at www.nursinghome411.org/forms-advocacy/. By keeping dated records, you can support substantiation of a problem with facility administration or, if necessary, your state health department or Medicaid Fraud Control Unit.
- **Use information on your facility’s staffing** to support your concerns, as appropriate. For examples:
 - If your facility’s nursing staff levels are low (below 4.1 hours per resident day) how are residents’ needs being met?
 - If there is a low presence of an administrator or medical director, who is overseeing the quality of care and services in the facility?
 - If there are issues with access to social work services or meaningful, resident-centered activities, having information on the facility’s staffing levels for these personnel can support your advocacy.
- **Be firm but respectful.** It is easy to get intimidated by medical authorities, particularly in a residential care setting. At the same time, by the time someone goes to the administrator it is likely that they are feeling frustrated and angry. However, in order to resolve a problem effectively, it is best to engage people as positively as possible.
- **Work with the resident or family council.** There is strength in numbers and speaking as a council can reduce concerns about retaliation. Many councils benefit by using the information on facility staffing and fact sheets on resident rights at www.nursinghome411.org to effectively identify and address problems.

³ <https://nurse.org/healthcare/nursing-home-administrator/>.

⁴ E. Siegel and H. Young, “Assuring Quality in Nursing Homes: The Black Box of Administrative and Clinical Leadership—A Scoping Review,” *The Gerontologist*, Volume 61, Issue 4. June 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnaa175>.