
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 429 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY INNAMORATO, SHUSTERMAN, WILLIAMS, LEE, KINSEY,
HILL-EVANS, BARRAR, A. DAVIS, CALTAGIRONE, T. DAVIS, KORTZ,
MURT, YOUNGBLOOD, FRANKEL, READSHAW, OTTEN, ZABEL, MERSKI,
NEILSON, FREEMAN, WARREN, SAPPEY, MILLARD, DALEY, DeLUCA,
McCLINTON, MARKOSEK, MADDEN, HOWARD, WEBSTER, HOHENSTEIN,
RABB, HARRIS, CEPHAS, DELLOSO, KULIK, RAVENSTAHL, JOHNSON-
HARRELL, MULLINS AND DRISCOLL, JUNE 24, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, JUNE 24, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Department of Health to lower nurse-to-patient ratios
2 in regulation for long-term care nursing facilities in this
3 Commonwealth to ensure safe staffing standards.

4 WHEREAS, Over 80,000 of this Commonwealth's most vulnerable
5 residents reside in more than 700 long-term care nursing
6 facilities throughout Pennsylvania; and

7 WHEREAS, Of the 80,000 residents residing in long-term care
8 nursing facilities, 39% are between the ages of 85 and 94, and
9 9% are 95 years of age or older; and

10 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth's aging population has led to a
11 significant increase in the number of older adults requiring
12 care at long-term care nursing facilities; and

13 WHEREAS, Long-term care nursing facilities now have a greater
14 proportion of residents with chronic conditions and complex care
15 needs and who have a greater dependency on caregivers to meet
16 those needs; and

1 WHEREAS, Approximately 36% of residents in this
2 Commonwealth's long-term care nursing facilities had a severe
3 cognitive impairment in 2014; and

4 WHEREAS, Residents' quality of life and quality of care are
5 directly impacted by the number of nursing staff, including
6 registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and certified
7 nursing aides; and

8 WHEREAS, The Department of Health is responsible for the
9 licensing and oversight of long-term care nursing facilities in
10 this Commonwealth, including the annual survey process and
11 complaint inspections; and

12 WHEREAS, In 2016, a performance audit report of the
13 Department of Health and its mission of regulation of long-term
14 care nursing facilities by the Auditor General reported serious
15 concerns in the areas of resident quality of life and quality of
16 care, complaint processes and sanctions; and

17 WHEREAS, The performance audit report found that the
18 Department of Health lacked policies and procedures for
19 enforcing the minimum staffing requirement in regulation, rarely
20 cited facilities for having inadequate staffing levels and did
21 not require those facilities who failed to meet the standard
22 ratios to increase their staffing levels; and

23 WHEREAS, Despite further investigations into inadequate and
24 substandard care in long-term care nursing facilities, serious
25 problems persist in the quality of care to residents in long-
26 term care nursing facilities; and

27 WHEREAS, The current long-term care nursing facility staffing
28 ratios found under 28 Pa. Code § 211.12 have not been updated in
29 decades; and

30 WHEREAS, High nurse-to-patient ratios and other unbalanced

1 levels of nurse staffing can lead to unsafe conditions for both
2 nurses and residents, including medication errors, infections
3 and falls and even accidental death; and

4 WHEREAS, Mandating lower nurse-to-patient ratios, determined
5 based on research, best practices and experiences in long-term
6 care nursing facilities in this Commonwealth, will emphasize the
7 importance of safety and quality improvement in providing value-
8 based care to residents in long-term care nursing facilities;
9 therefore be it

10 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives urge the
11 Department of Health to lower nurse-to-patient ratios in
12 regulation for long-term care nursing facilities in this
13 Commonwealth to ensure safe staffing standards.