



**From:** [linda.prueter@rcn.com](mailto:linda.prueter@rcn.com)  
**To:** [DH, LTCRegs](#)  
**Subject:** [External] Staffing Concerns at LTC Facilities  
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To Ms. Lori Gutierrez--Deputy Director, Office of Policy

Dear Ms. Gutierrez:

I am deeply concerned about staffing issues in long-term care facilities. Recently, I walked into Good Shepherd Home in Allentown, PA, to visit my husband and found that he would not be getting out of bed that day because there was not enough staff to get him in and out of bed. Last summer, my father called me from Phoebe Nursing Home in Richlandtown, PA, and barely managed to say, "I'm—so—thirsty." At the time, I was not permitted into my dad's facility because of COVID protocols. I wondered, if the staff could not manage to get him a glass of water—repeatedly—what other aspects of his care they might be neglecting. Both of these facilities consistently receive high ratings on their reviews, and I generally hold them in high esteem. Yet the COVID-19 pandemic has put them into a period of crisis. Both facilities have worked hard to attract and retain nurses and nurses' aides, yet they are struggling.

Why would the Department of Health choose this particular time to change its requirement for nursing hours provided to each patient? While it is a noble goal, will it provide the funding these facilities need to increase their staffing? Will it provide the actual staff to help my husband get out of bed or help patients get a drink of water? (I ended up discharging my father from the nursing home and caring for him at home with the help of hospice until his death.)

Why would the Department of Health choose this time to let expire the emergency measure that permitted other staff members to assist? Therapists who were trained under the emergency measure were helping to feed patients and perform other supportive duties. Just as COVID is ramping up again, their efforts are thwarted. So my husband, who has advanced multiple sclerosis and requires a ventilator at night, is left in bed where his position is not optimal for his breathing.

Why has the Department of Health not raised its rate of reimbursement for Medical Assistance in 7 years? My husband is 59 years old and is a veteran of the United States Air Force. He has needed long-term care for 12 years. We are so very grateful for the care he has received. I am frightened at the trend I am seeing, as the quality of his care is truly a life or death matter.

Thank you for reading my concerns and considering the answers to my questions.

Sincerely,

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