

CHERELLE L. PARKER  
COUNCILWOMAN, 9<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

CITY HALL, ROOM 577  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107  
PHONE: 215-686-3455  
FAX: 215-686-1938

DISTRICT OFFICE  
1538 E. WADSWORTH AVENUE  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19150  
PHONE: 215-686-3454  
FAX: 215-685-9271

[www.PHLCouncil.com/CherelleParker](http://www.PHLCouncil.com/CherelleParker)



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
CITY COUNCIL



MAJORITY LEADER

August 27, 2021

Alison Beam  
Acting Secretary of Health  
Pennsylvania Department of Health  
Health and Welfare Building  
8th Floor West  
625 Forster Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Secretary Beam,

I am writing in support of the Department of Health's proposed nursing home regulations, which would require a minimum of 4.1 hours of resident care per day in every skilled nursing facility in Pennsylvania.

The tragedy which has unfolded in Pennsylvania's and Philadelphia's nursing homes in the past 18 months has revealed profound weaknesses in the state's long-term care system, all of which predate the pandemic. None of those weaknesses is more critical than that of understaffing. Research has shown that adequate staffing is critical to ensure high-quality care and dignity for nursing home residents – yet too many facilities in our state are under-staffed. Chronic understaffing meant that nursing homes were unprepared to meet the challenges of the pandemic; it also contributes to the poor working conditions and high turnover which have plagued this industry for decades, and which further weakened our system's resilience in the face of COVID-19.

Over 13,000 of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable residents have died in our nursing homes, and we have heard from constituents, family members, and caregivers in Philadelphia about how this must never be allowed to happen again.

I join with them in applauding the Department's decision to call for 4.1 hours of care per resident-day, and I urge the Department to maintain this high standard of care in its final regulations. **I further call on the Department to specify that hours of care be defined to include only the nursing staff who provide direct resident care.** Finally, given reports that some nursing facilities are evading existing regulations, I call on the Department to ensure clear enforcement of these regulations and accountability for facilities that fail to provide high-quality care.



## CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

### CITY COUNCIL

I understand that achieving adequate staffing will require investment on the part of the state – both to pay for more staff and to raise wages in the long-term care industry to attract committed caregivers, many of whom have left the bedside due to inadequate pay and poor working conditions. **I look forward to the Governor and the General Assembly working to make sure that these regulations are fully funded.**

In conclusion, I join advocates across the state in fully supporting the Department's proposal to implement 4.1 staffing as soon as possible.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cherelle L. Parker".

Cherelle L. Parker  
Councilwoman – 9<sup>th</sup> District  
Majority Leader  
City Council of Philadelphia