

Solutions for the Long Term Care Workforce Shortage: Growing the Certified Nursing Assistants' Workforce

AHCA/NCAL urges Congress to take action now to strengthen the long-term care (LTC) workforce by supporting policies that would help build our certified nursing assistants' (CNAs') workforce.

Please co-sponsor the Building America's Health Care Workforce Act (H.R. 9067), introduced by Brett Guthrie (R-2-KY) and Madeleine Dean (D-4-PA), that provides much needed flexibilities for nurse aides in training and gives them the ability to transition to long term roles (to accommodate training and testing capacities to meet demand).

The COVID-19 pandemic deeply challenged the entire health care continuum: the LTC sector is grappling with a historic workforce crisis, financial challenges, and closures of communities and centers across the country. It is no secret that the health care workforce continues to experience significant shortages while the demand for services has increased. Now, more than ever, we need policymakers to focus on efforts that will bolster and rebuild our LTC workforce.

Building a Pipeline of Caregivers

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation learned there were hundreds of thousands of individuals who had long wanted to serve in direct care capacities but did not have a pathway in the past. H.R. 9067 provides a pathway to attract these individuals into the LTC field and to develop and retain them as caregivers.

More specifically, H.R. 9067 includes key provisions that would bolster our nursing workforce and broaden career opportunities for countless individuals. It would allow for time worked as a nurse aide in a nursing home to count towards the 75 hours minimum training to become a CNA so long as the nurse aide is working in an area, identified by the state, as experiencing a nurse aide shortage. This legislation would not apply to a center that has had deficiencies related to direct patient harm in the prior two years. The legislation would also allow for a nurse aide to work for more than four months but not for more than 12 months, giving needed time to retain these caregivers while they pursue completing training and testing to become a CNA. Unfortunately, testing backlogs remain in some states due to various reasons (i.e., instructor availability, testing site space issues, testing location distances away from the applicant's home and processing time for credentials) across the country making it necessary to have this additional time of 12 months for the individual to become a CNA.

We urge you to co-sponsor the bipartisan Building America's Health Care Workforce Act (H.R. 9067) today to help grow LTC's critically important CNA workforce.

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