

CAHCF/CCAL

Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities
Connecticut Center for Assisted Living

March 23, 2023

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MATT BARRETT, PRESIDENT AND CEO
OF THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH CARE
FACILITIES / CONNECTICUT CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING
(CAHCF/CCAL) IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL NO. 1228, AN ACT
CONCERNING THE STATE'S HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.**

The Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities / Connecticut Center For Assisted Living (CAHCF/CCAL). CAHCF/CCAL is a one hundred and fifty member trade association of skilled nursing facilities and assisted living communities. **We applaud the leadership of the committee for addressing critically important health care workforce development issues in our state and specifically support:**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1228, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE'S
HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE.**

We specifically applaud this measure as Section 1 would require the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Labor Commissioner and Commissioner of Public Health, to study the feasibility of establishing an interdistrict magnet school program that provides education and training to students interested in health care professions.

The need to prioritize and protect our state's growing elderly population with meaningful workforce development solutions is a pressing matter of concern. The current staffing shortage already shows an access to care crisis here in Connecticut and forecasts that it will worsen in the next years.

An American Health Care Association (AHCA) report "State of the Nursing Home Sector" released this week illustrates the impact that long-standing economic and workforce challenges are having on our seniors and their access to care here in Connecticut and across the nation. (See [State-of-Nursing-Homes-Infographic.pdf \(ahcaphpressoffice.org\)](https://www.ahcaphpressoffice.org/State-of-Nursing-Homes-Infographic.pdf)).

Highlights from the report include:

Historic Labor Shortage

- Nursing homes experienced the worst job loss of any health care sector during the pandemic, with 210,000 jobs lost from February 2020 to December 2022.
- Workforce levels are the lowest they've been since 1994.
- At the current pace of modest job growth, nursing homes would not return to pre-pandemic levels until 2027.
- 84 percent of nursing homes are currently facing moderate to high levels of staffing shortages.

On the Financial Brink

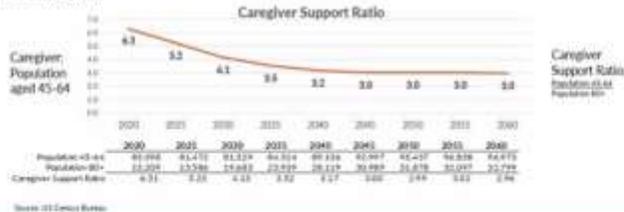
- 55 percent of nursing home providers say they are operating at a loss.
- 52 percent may not be able to continue operating for more than a year at the current pace.

Access to Care Crisis

- 54 percent of nursing home providers say they are having to limit new admissions due to staffing shortages.
 - 465 nursing homes have closed over the course of the pandemic, displacing 18,071 residents.
- It is especially alarming, as demonstrated in the chart below, that current forecasts show there will be less people to care for our over-80 years old population at a time when they will need a vibrant system of caregivers across the health care spectrum:

Caregiver Support Ratio

- Caregiver support ratio represents the 45-64 population divided by the 80+ population. This means there will be less people to care for the 80+ population causing more seniors to seek housing and care outside of their home.
- At any point, 6 percent of adult children serve as caregivers, and 17 percent will take on this role at some point in their lives
- Those who do provide care devote an average of 77 hours per month, which can take a toll on both the finances and health of the caregiver;



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Senate Bill No. 1228 and other workforce development proposed bills before the committee represent meaningful policies for both the immediate and long-term. Thank you and we look forward to continuing to work with the committee to advance solutions for our state's seniors so that they will access to the high-quality care they deserve.

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