



Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition
2519 Connecticut Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

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Interagency Coordinating Committee
on Healthy Aging and Age-Friendly Communities
Administration for Community Living
330 C St, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Interagency Coordinating Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the May 2024 ACL Report to Congress titled, *Aging in the United States: A Strategic Framework for a National Plan on Aging*. This valuable report provides a comprehensive and detailed review of aging programs and services throughout the United States. Given the growing number of older adults and their desire to remain active in communities, the report reflects how local and state leaders can implement best practices across health and social support systems.

However, the report could better represent individuals who live and work in U.S. nursing homes. Of the report's ten references to "nursing homes" or "nursing facilities," five position nursing homes as an unfortunate outcome of inadequate home and community-based services (HCBS). While we support all efforts to promote HCBS (given the preference of many older adults to receive care at home), it is nevertheless important to recognize that the 1.3 million people who live in nursing homes are still members of their communities and should have access to the community services older adults receive.ⁱ

Nursing homes are a vital part of communities. The people living and working in nursing homes want to continue to actively participate in community and civic life. A significant shortcoming of our national aging policy is that many cannot. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, over 60 percent of nursing home residents never have a visitor, and most nursing home residents do not have sufficient support to leave the nursing home itself to participate in community activities or to advocate for their needs (which, in some cases, may even impact their ability to vote).ⁱⁱ The ACL report could address approaches to remedy these issues.

Most people will receive care in a nursing home at some point during their lives. Among people ages 57 to 61, 56 percent will spend at least one night in a nursing home.ⁱⁱⁱ Transitions to and from these nursing home stays can sometimes be the most difficult and even dangerous parts of someone's health and personal journey. Moreover, making the decision to accept nursing home services can be a stressful experience itself. Better integrating nursing home teams in conversations about supports and services for older adults living in the community is vital to ensure transitions of care are safe and

positive experiences and to reduce stigma around older adults and care partners seeking the care they need.

Moreover, to improve the quality and safety of nursing home stays (however long), federal agencies (most notably, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Health and Human Services) should encourage and enable nursing homes to become more homelike, community-integrated, and person-centered environments.^{iv} Though many now feel, look, and operate like institutional healthcare settings, innovators across the country have demonstrated that more homelike alternatives are possible.

Nursing homes are receiving new national attention. The ACL report could be further strengthened by referencing *The National Imperative to Improve Nursing Home Quality*, a 2022 report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).^v The 577-page report includes recommendations for federal policy that would not only improve the quality of nursing home care but help better integrate nursing homes into the network of long-term services and supports for older adults. Many of those recommendations are reinforced by the Biden Administration’s February 2022 Fact Sheet on improving nursing home quality.^{vi}

The Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition can serve as a valuable national partner. As part of the ongoing effort to promote and implement recommendations from the NASEM Report, The John A. Hartford Foundation generously funded LeadingAge to convene a group of organizations and individuals, the Moving Forward Coalition, to prioritize NASEM recommendations, develop a set of action plans, and work to advance them now.^{vii} Moving Forward’s nine action plans highlight opportunities for immediate nursing home quality improvement with the consensus of nursing home residents, providers, policymakers, advocates, experts, and community members.

The Coalition received additional funding to implement three of those action plans focused on strengthening resident councils in Connecticut and other states, improving the ability of nursing homes to address What Matters to each resident, and supporting the development of more standardized career pathways for certified nursing assistants.

In summary, we support the recommendations in the *Strategic Framework* and believe they will contribute to better quality of life for older adults, their care partners, and others across the U.S. In addition, we strongly urge the Interagency Coordinating Committee to include recommendations related to improving quality of life for nursing home residents. The 2022 NASEM Report is a good resource for nursing home-specific policies that align with broader efforts to enhance aging services. The Moving Forward Coalition is ready to support efforts to ensure that nursing home residents and staff are included in the services, supports, and community life of the places they call home.

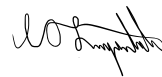
Thank you very much,

Alice Bonner, Chair



Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition

Isaac Longobardi, Director



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- ⁱ “Nursing Home Care,” National Center for Health Statistics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 5, 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/nursing-home-care.htm>
- ⁱⁱ “Make Someone’s Day: Visit a Nursing Home,” Texas Health Care Association, October 2019, <https://www.txhca.org/make-someones-day-visit-a-nursing-home/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Michael Hurd. “Average American’s Risk of Needing Nursing Home Care Is Higher Than Previously Estimated,” RAND, August 29, 2017, <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2017/08/28/index1.html>
- ^{iv} Marc Cohen, et al. “It’s Time For HUD To Act On Nursing Home Quality Improvement,” Health Affairs Forefront, June 17, 2024, https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/s-time-hud-act-nursing-home-quality-improvement#xd_co_f=M2YxMzQzYmYtZTA5NC00YTA4LTk3MzltZGU4Y2ViYzc2NmM2~
- ^v Committee on the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes, Board on Health Care Services, Health and Medicine Division, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, “The National Imperative to Improve Nursing Home Quality: Our Commitment to Residents, Families, and Staff” (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2022), 1-577.
- ^{vi} “FACT SHEET: Protecting Seniors by Improving Safety and Quality of Care in the Nation’s Nursing Homes,” Statements and Releases, The White House, February 28, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/02/28/fact-sheet-protecting-seniors-and-people-with-disabilities-by-improving-safety-and-quality-of-care-in-the-nations-nursing-homes/>
- ^{vii} “Taking Action,” Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition, Accessed: August 26, 2024, <https://movingforwardcoalition.org/taking-action/>

