

**Hearing on Examining Long-Term Care in America:  
The Impact of the Coronavirus in Nursing Homes  
September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022  
2:00 PM ET  
Rayburn House Office Building and Via Zoom**

**Written Testimony  
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Chair, Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition**

Chairman Clyburn, Ranking Member Scalise, Members of the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition. We are a growing coalition of more than 200 action-oriented leaders and organizations that have come together this year to create action plans for effective and sustainable improvements that will be delivered in the near future. I am here today because each and every one of us cares deeply and is committed to improving quality of life for individuals living in nursing homes in the United States.

We have submitted a letter to the subcommittee on behalf of the Coalition, that outlines six ways that Congress can begin taking meaningful steps to improve nursing home quality. It is not an all-inclusive list, and not all of the proposed actions can be done right away – some will require more time. We urge Congress to work alongside us, to take action, so that all nursing home residents receive the care and support that they deserve.

Nearly 1.3 million people live in our nation's 15,000+ nursing homes, and another 1.2-1.5 million work in them. The coronavirus pandemic has brought an intensified sense of urgency to addressing longstanding issues of inadequate care and support. The Moving Forward Coalition

is committed to improving quality by building on strong research, clinical expertise, tested models, and advocacy for sustainable improvements.

The Moving Forward Coalition’s approach is different from some other groups. Our purpose is to develop, test, and promote a set of step-by-step action plans that can be implemented, based on recommendations in the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) report that was released in April 2022.

The Coalition began in July 2022 and has established seven committees, each focused on priorities such as workforce support and improved oversight and assessment of quality, including infection prevention and management. Over 200 individuals and organizations, including nursing home residents, workers, policymakers, advocates, and others have joined the Coalition in just a few months, and that number is growing each week.

NASEM Report recommendations are well aligned with critical needs described in the White House’s February 2022 Fact Sheet on: Protecting Seniors and People with Disabilities by Improving Safety and Quality of Care in the Nation’s Nursing Homes (released February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022). Both documents convey a sense of urgency to address growing gaps in care and support, that were brought into sharp focus during the pandemic, as well as citing best practices.

Every person deserves safe, high-quality, age-friendly care and support throughout their life. And the people who dedicate their professional lives to that work – for whom it is “a calling,” or “the work I was meant to do” – deserve the resources, compensation, training and support to provide that care. That is why it’s critical that federal and state lawmakers and nursing homes

work in partnership to address the workforce crisis through workforce development and funding, improve state survey processes for nursing home oversight, strengthen nursing home transparency, fairly reimburse the cost of care and reduce purchasing costs, prioritize equity among racial and ethnic groups, and incentivize adoption of certified electronic health records and information technology interoperability in nursing homes.

I began my professional life working with older adults when I was 19 years old and got a job as a nurse's aide in a nursing home when I was in college. That experience led me to a lifelong career in nursing homes because I was inspired by what was possible and what nurses and nursing assistants did to create a positive, supportive, loving home.

I have seen how hard many nursing home teams work to provide quality care and support for older people, often under challenging conditions such as COVID. However, I have also been in nursing homes in which the care falls short of meeting basic human needs, such as getting help to use the bathroom or having a bath or shower even once a week. Over 85% of nursing home residents need assistance with one or more activities of daily living – yet some residents are not consistently receiving that care. That must change and must change as soon as possible.

While we have federal and state regulations designed to set standards for nursing home quality, those regulations may not be fully enforced in all cases by inspectors (also known as state surveyors). We need a regulatory framework that reinforces and rewards quality.

We need to ensure that What Matters most to residents is integral to the culture in every nursing home. All nursing homes should be quality homes.

The Moving Forward Coalition is off to a strong start. Our committees are holding their first calls or meetings this month, and we look forward to sharing action plans with this subcommittee in early 2023 based on the work that is beginning now.

Nursing homes are a part of the healthcare system that is often overlooked. The Moving Forward Coalition is bringing individuals and organizations together to raise expectations about what is possible. We urge Congress to lead the way toward a future of nursing homes full of the humanity and grace that all of us want and deserve.

We offer the Moving Forward Coalition as a leader, eager to work with Congress, state and federal agencies and others to improve nursing home quality now and into the future. Thank you very much for this opportunity to present testimony today.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice Bonner".

Alice Bonner, Chair

On Behalf of the Moving Forward Nursing Home Quality Coalition