



March 15, 2024

Subject: Support for H-7733

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

I've been a CNA since 2015, jumping into it after 30 years as an EMT because I've always wanted to help people. Over the years, I've seen a lot, especially in the last few, that's made me realize just how much our nursing home system needs reform.

Working at a nonprofit nursing home once, things weren't perfect, but they were better. We had the supplies we needed – decent diapers that actually did their job, and enough staff so everyone could get proper care. But when I moved to work for Marquis, it was like stepping into a different world.

Imagine trying to care for 60 residents at night with just one other CNA. The diapers we were given were so cheap, they might as well have been paper towels. When they inevitably leaked, we didn't even have enough sheets to change out all the wet beds. We ended up having to move residents near the nurse's station where they ended up having to sit up all night, some falling asleep in a wheelchair, because their beds were soaked. It was heartbreaking.

And the smell. The mattresses, covered in plastic, would reek of urine because the diapers couldn't hold anything. Despite trying to clean them, the stench lingered, and our residents had to try and sleep in that.

One of the consequences of poor supplies you often don't hear about is residents failing to get adequate sleep. Because of the poor quality of the diapers, we had to wake them up every two hours if they soaked through their diaper. This creates not only stress and humiliation, but it also heightens the likelihood of falls and injuries during the day. Sometimes when I would come in for my shift, I would find someone with a gash on

their face because they experienced a fall during the day from exhaustion due to not getting enough sleep.

The worst part, though, was seeing the skin breakdown. It starts like a rash, then blisters and peels, turning from white to pink, to a deep, fire engine red, and then to grey with sores – bed sores. The pain is unimaginable. Residents would yell out in agony as we tried to gently clean them, each touch a torment because the cheap diapers did nothing to keep them dry or protect their skin. We also didn't have access to ample barrier cream or even body wash. I and other staff had to bring in our own supplies just to try to help alleviate residents' skin ailments. This, above all, showed the real cost of cutting corners.

This is no way for anyone to live. The nonprofits showed me it doesn't have to be this way. They had better staffing ratios, making sure each resident got the attention they deserved. It wasn't just about having enough hands; it was about having enough hearts in the game, people who had the time to care because the system supported them.

That's why the Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board is so important. It's not just about throwing more money at the problem; it's about ensuring that money is used right – for better supplies, enough staff, and ultimately, better care for our residents. We need a system that holds these facilities accountable, making sure they're not just pocketing the profits while their residents and staff suffer.

Thank you for listening. I hope we can make the change our elderly deserve.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Mann
7 Brentwood Dr
Coventry RI 02816

401-332-1426