July 7, 2020

Chairman Marvin L. Abney
House Finance Committee Chair
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903
Rep-abney@rilegislature.gov
Cobrien@rilegislture.gov

Re: Opposition to House 7624 - NURSING HOME STAFFING AND QUALITY CARE ACT

Dear Chairman Abney,

Please accept this letter respectfully opposing H-7624. Cutting edge health care practice examines the needs of the patient and then builds a care team from across disciplines to address these unique needs. H-7624 does the opposite, it puts into law the required hours of nurses and CNAs with no flexibility to tailor individualized care. Operating a nursing home requires a broad array of people; receptionists, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance and food service in addition to nursing and CNA's. This bill sets an arbitrary number of staff, not necessarily the people with the right skills.

Nursing and CNA work is difficult and requires both a great deal of compassion and skill. This bill does not help address these shortages in long term care. As the state continues to increase the minimum wage, it becomes harder and harder to retain good staff. Retail jobs are simply more appealing to most than personal care of the impaired elderly.

Nursing homes are already required to have "sufficient nursing staff" to assure resident safety, and to attain or maintain "the highest practicable" well-being of each resident. This requirement is enforced with regular and periodic unannounced inspections. The federal agency that regulates nursing facilities, CMS, measures and reports on staffing adequacy for each nursing home in the U.S. Rhode Island's nursing homes rank **eleventh in the country** for staffing adequacy[1]. Only Maine ranks higher among the New England states.

Nursing home leaders need the flexibility to make sustainable changes that support the team in providing quality care. We respectfully ask the committee to reject H-7624.

Sincerely,

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