

What the Experts Say

"Quality of care has substantially improved in Florida nursing homes since the introduction of increased nurse staffing levels and other quality standards since 2001...poor quality of care is linked to inadequate staffing levels."



University of South Florida Research Study
February 2009

"As someone who has been a nursing home caregiver for 30 years, I know what it was like for residents before we were able to get safe staffing passed and strengthened in Florida, and I cannot stand by and let my residents' health and safety be put in jeopardy. I care for families' loved ones as if they are a member of my own family."



Pearl Gooden,
Certified Nursing Assistant
Accentia Health and Rehabilitation
Center of Tampa

"As many national studies have shown, an important way to assure high quality of care is to provide adequate levels of nursing-home care. By relaxing state standards for nursing care, the state of Florida has opened a door that could put tens of thousands of very frail, vulnerable Floridians at risk."

Jack McRay,
AARP Florida Advocacy Manager

1199SEIU

United Healthcare Workers East

FLORIDA

With 350,000 members in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Maryland and Washington, D.C., 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is the largest and fastest growing healthcare union in the country. Our mission is to achieve affordable, high quality healthcare for all and quality jobs for working families.

Representing more than 22,000 hospital and nursing home workers in over 100 healthcare facilities across Florida, 1199SEIU members have a proven track record of finding common sense solutions to improve the quality of life for all Floridians – from the passage of landmark safe staffing laws for nursing homes, to increasing the minimum wage and ensuring smaller class sizes for our students.

EveryMinuteCountsFlorida.org
(888) 313-4448



Facebook.com/1199SEIUFlorida



Twitter.com/1199SEIUFlorida #EveryMinuteCounts

Text "MINUTE" to 30644 to receive text alerts on safe staffing in nursing homes and other healthcare-related issues.*

*Standard data and message rates may apply

EveryMinute Counts



FLORIDIANS UNITED FOR
SAFE STAFFING IN NURSING HOMES



QUALITY CARE TOOLKIT

for Florida Nursing Home Residents

A 3 step guide to
protecting your loved ones
in a nursing home.

Bedside Care Cut for Most Vulnerable

During the 2011 legislative session in Tallahassee, lawmakers reduced the minimum time caregivers spend at the bedside of nursing home residents by 18 minutes per day.



As a result, many nursing homes have already cut staffing to the new state minimum, which is below levels recommended by experts.

This roll back is dangerous and could mean delays in responding to resident falls, less time to treat bedsores, and other terrible outcomes that threaten the health and safety of Florida seniors and people living with a disability.

Every Minute Counts

To some, this reduction of time for bedside care might not sound like much, but for the 78-year-old resident with congestive heart failure who is recovering from a recent stroke, or the 83-year-old resident who falls by accident, every minute counts.

When it comes to your loved one in a nursing home, what does a minute mean to you?

We know that Every Minute Counts.

ALERT: Health Risks for Your Loved Ones

Cutting bedside care by 18 minutes per day for each resident can have serious and even catastrophic consequences for them.

Without adequate, hands-on care, residents are subject to:

- Reduced monitoring, which may increase falls, infections and even cause premature death
- Infrequent repositioning, which increases risk of bedsores
- Less time to assist residents with eating, which can cause malnutrition and dehydration
- Reduced personal interaction

These health risks were commonplace in Florida until we passed a landmark safe staffing law in 2001 with bipartisan support greatly improving care in our state. Safe staffing must remain a top priority to ensure that the highest quality of care is provided to our seniors and people living with a disability.

What You Can Do to Protect Your Loved Ones

If you or someone you know has a loved one in a nursing home, there are three important steps you should take to make sure they are protected from staffing cuts.

Step 1: Ask Questions

As a first step, ask the following questions to the nursing home administrator where your loved one resides:

- 1) Are you keeping safe staffing levels of at least 2.9 hours of bedside care by certified nursing assistants (CNA's), or are you cutting staffing to the new minimum level set by the state? What is the current CNA staffing level?

Florida nursing homes have a moral choice and obligation to keep staffing at a higher level than the state MINIMUM, which is now below what independent experts recommend.

- 2) Have there been any resident falls, injuries or delays in providing care as a result of cuts to safe staffing?

Staffing cuts make it more difficult for caregivers to respond to falls and injuries and can create delays in turning residents to prevent bedsores, cleaning, toileting and blood pressure checks.

- 3) What is the licensed practical nurse (LPN) to patient ratio in the nursing home, and what are you doing to make sure that ratio is as low as possible?

Forty residents are the most that one LPN can be assigned at a time.

- 4) What is the certified nursing assistant to patient ratio in the nursing home, and what are you doing to make sure that ratio is as low as possible?

Twenty residents are the most that one CNA can be assigned at a time.

Step 2: Call for Help

If you have reason to believe that the health and safety of your loved one has been put in jeopardy, or they are not receiving the care they need, please contact one of the following resources to file a complaint:

Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)



AHCA is the state agency tasked with overseeing health care facilities.

Phone: (888) 419-3456

E-mail: CAU@AHCA.myflorida.com

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman is a state and federally recognized advocate who independently oversees nursing homes and other long-term care settings.



Phone: (888) 831-0404

E-mail: LTCOPInformer@elderaffairs.org

Step 3: Contact Your Elected Officials

Your state senator and state representative can help you move your complaint forward with AHCA and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

It is also critical that you urge your state legislators to restore safe staffing levels in nursing homes to a minimum weekly average of 2.9 hours of bedside care per resident per day by CNA's.

Tell them Every Minute Counts, and explain what a minute means to you and your loved ones.

Florida Legislature

Call the number below and ask for your legislators' contact info, or visit these websites:

Phone: (800) 342-1827

Florida Senate: FLSenate.gov

Florida House of Representatives: MyFloridaHouse.gov

