



To: Chairwoman Concannon, Members, House Children and Seniors Committee
From: **Dana Weaver**, Chief Operating Officer, LeadingAge Kansas
Date: February 20, 2020

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2629

Thank you, Madame Chair, and Members of the Committee. I am Dana Weaver, Chief Operating Officer with LeadingAge Kansas, the state association for faith based and other not-for-profit aging services. We have 160 members across Kansas, which include not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living, homes plus, housing, low-income housing, home health agencies, home and community-based service programs, PACE and Meals on Wheels. Our members serve more than 30,000 elders each day.

In support of House Bill 2629, we would like to provide the Committee with an overview of the long term care workforce issues we are facing in Kansas, as well as the ways our association has been working to assist our members in addressing these challenges.

The Issue

The aging services field is experiencing an ever-growing workforce shortage in Kansas. There simply aren't enough individuals with the appropriate education to fill the jobs. This community is comprised of long-term care, assisted living, home health, hospice and HCBS providers for the frail elderly. When there aren't enough qualified individuals to work in the field, quality care for older Kansans declines.

The Data

Much of the information available to frame this issue is from long-term care as there are mechanisms in place to gauge turnover and staffing levels through cost reporting required of all nursing homes.

Turnover for all positions in Kansas nursing homes in 2018 was 70.3% for all Kansas Nursing Homes. For the nonprofit providers that LeadingAge Kansas represents, total turnover was 58.4%. This is down from a total turnover of 72.2% in 2017 and 63.1% for nonprofits.

Staffing. Despite our shortage, we continue to be well-above the state-mandated minimum staffing levels for nursing homes, which is an average of 2 hours per resident/ per day. Nursing homes follow federal requirements, which require them to staff to the needs of their residents.

Nursing Hours Per Resident Day – Statewide Average in 2018	
Non-profit	For-Profit
4.7 hours/day	3.7 hours/day

The nursing hours per resident day are taken directly from nursing home cost report data, adjusted by Case Mix Index, and audited by the State of Kansas.

Vacancy rates. This is the number needed to truly tell our story. No one has been collecting vacancy rates for nursing home workers which causes a huge gap in understanding the crisis in the field. It is in process by KDADS and we should have good vacancy data for 2019 later this year.

LeadingAge Kansas/Provider Work

In 2015, LeadingAge Kansas created a Workforce Commission to provide guidance to the association how to address the shortage. Their vision is to create a competent, abundant, stable and diverse workforce to serve aging Kansans. In order to do this, they have broken the issue down into 4 pillars. All of our work falls under each of these pillars:

- **PUBLIC POLICY** – advocating for a statutory, regulatory and reimbursement environment that fosters and supports the long-term care workforce through sound information and data.
 - Commissioned the Kansas Health Institute to do a wage disparity report between long-term care and acute care
 - Advocated to KDADS to create a section in the Kansas Medicaid Cost Report for vacancy rates
 - Continue to advocate for appropriate Medicaid rates to improve wages in long-term care
- **PROVIDER PRACTICES** -creating an environment where people want to work.
 - Launched an Onboarding Toolkit that focuses on creating a welcoming culture to new employees
 - Continuously highlight promising practices from around the country
 - Conducted a state-wide employee satisfaction survey for nonprofit providers to gain a better understanding of how to improve workplace culture
- **EDUCATION/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** – providing best practices in talent retention, innovation, diversity and the issue as a whole.
 - Highlight promising practices and workforce issues at each of our educational events
 - Created a long-term care workforce conference in Kansas
 - Connect with higher educational entities to inform them about long-term care and find ways to connect them with providers in their service areas
- **PUBLIC AWARENESS/IMAGE** – helping our members improve their image in their own communities.
 - Launched Careers in Aging Services Week in order to expose students to the field and show them all of the opportunities available.
 - Launched Heroes in Aging Social Media Highlights featuring individuals working in the field and bring greater awareness to the profession

- Encourage members to be quality clinical sites for CNA and nursing programs to expose students to positive long-term care providers

We present all of this today to show you that there is work being done on this issue by the provider community, but many barriers exist to achieving the vision of our Workforce Commission. Policy needs to be developed to support the efforts and the individuals working in the field. This is a healthcare issue as well as an economic impact concern for the state. There will always be a need for long-term care services in Kansas and we need to collectively position the field so that we can be a retirement state of choice. House Bill 2629 will help elevate long term care services in Kansas by curbing abusive practices of health care staffing agencies in our state to ensure that older Kansans will continue to have access to a competent, abundant, stable and diverse workforce.