



June 25, 2021

The Honorable Fred Keller
U.S. House of Representatives
Longworth House Office Building Room 1717
15 Independence Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20515-3812

Dear Representative Keller,

On behalf of Argentum, the leading national association representing senior living communities and the older adults and families they serve, we sincerely appreciate your leadership on H.R. 331, the Nurses CARE Act of 2021, to extend the flexibilities offered by Section 1135 waivers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This legislation is critically needed as the nation recovers from the pandemic and prepares for the growing care needs of our nation's seniors.

The members of Argentum operate senior living communities offering a continuum of care to include independent living, assisted living, memory care and Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) to older adults and their families. These communities are home to nearly two million vulnerable seniors, offering choice, dignity, security, and comfort in the final years of life, and employ nearly one million direct care and support staff who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic, working tirelessly and compassionately to keep everyone safe.

The flexibility created by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) last year to allow for Temporary Nurse Aides (TNAs) proved to be a critical resource for senior living providers in meeting the care needs of their residents. Recent industry surveys have shown that four in five assisted living communities have faced workforce shortages, including in critical frontline positions. Extending the certification flexibility beyond the national emergency would not only allow these TNAs to continue serving our nation's seniors, but also provide a critical career pathway and help meet the growing demand for qualified caregivers.

This legislation is particularly helpful to fill the need of direct care workers as we prepare for the increasing needs for long-term care, with 73 million Americans aged 65 or older by 2030, including 9.1 million age 85 or older. Prior to COVID-19, projections showed that another 1.4 million workers would be needed by 2025 to meet the growing care needs of our nation's seniors, the majority of these workers at the direct care level. Extending the waivers for TNA certification would be an immense boost to filling the workforce needs of this industry, and ensure that qualified caregivers who meet the requisite competency requirements are able to continue serving our nation's vulnerable seniors.

We thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to gain passage of this critical legislation.

Respectfully,

James Balda
President & CEO
Argentum