



October 18, 2022

The Honorable Ann Kuster
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bryan Steil
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Kuster and Steil,

On the heels of National Workforce Development month, we write to you during a period of historic workforce shortages. America's population is aging at its most rapid rate in our nation's history and we simply do not have the assisted living and aging services workforce to meet these demands. This is why your leadership of the 21st Century Long-Term Care Caucus could not be more timely. Within the next decade, for the first time, the U.S. will have more seniors than children. The most rapidly aging segment of the population are seniors who are aged 85 and older. It is these individuals who will need the greatest and most direct care, but at the same time our aging services workforce is at critically low levels.

We respectfully write for your help in addressing this crisis. While the economy as a whole has largely recovered job losses from the pandemic, the same hasn't been true for aging services providers. Just in the first 20-months of the pandemic, providers lost more than 100,000 caregivers, representing a decline of over 10 percent from pre-pandemic employment levels. And while the economy rebounds with an unemployment rate down to the lowest level since 1969, the rebound hasn't reached our nation's aging services providers.

The need for investment in our aging services workforce is two-fold: meeting the immediate needs of today's shortage and preparing for the incredible demands expected in the coming years and decades. Already, 10,000 Americans are turning age 65 every day, and estimates are that up to 70 percent will need some form of care in their lifetimes. Importantly, the 85-plus population—those most in need of aging services options—is due to nearly double by 2036 to 12.3 million.

A coalition of national associations representing settings across the long-term care continuum, including Argentum, American Senior Housing Association, and LeadingAge, supports at a minimum the implementation of these measures to immediately address the workforce crisis:

- Greatly expand federal incentives to allow aging services providers to retain and attract qualified staff;
- Expand existing federal workforce funding allocated to states, such as Job Corps and the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, and prioritize for long-term care workforce shortages;
- Increase funding to support proven career pathway opportunities in senior living and geriatric care through academic settings such as community colleges and secondary education;

- Expand and incentivize the Registered Apprenticeship Programs to develop career pathways for aging services providers and implement grant programs within stakeholder partnerships; and
- Enact common-sense immigration programs that build dependable international pipelines of trained caregivers.

We believe that with a robust and targeted federal investment, so much can be done to develop in-demand career paths and help train a workforce to care for older adults in their greatest time of need. We would sincerely appreciate an opportunity to discuss this matter further. Please do not hesitate to contact Maggie Elehwany, Argentum Senior Vice President of Public Policy (melehwany@argentum.org), should you need any further information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



James Balda
President & CEO
Argentum



Dave Schless
President
American Senior
Housing Association (ASHA)



Katie Smith Sloan
President and CEO
LeadingAge