



July 26, 2021

Senator Rachel May
New York State Senate
333 E. Washington St., Suite 805,
Syracuse, NY 13202

Dear Senator May,

I am providing the following testimonial, in support of the Joint Public Hearing: Nursing Home, Assisted Living, and Homecare Workforce – Challenges and Solutions on July 27th. This testimonial is based on my work with InterFaith Works' One to One Program, which connects volunteers with nursing home residents to spark joy and social connection.

The impact of the work force shortage on Long Term Care has been enormous and has had a ripple effect on senior healthcare. The staff that have remained working at the facilities are now being asked to do more jobs and duties than one person can accomplish. They are overworked, burnt out, and take home that stress with them when they go home. We have heard repeatedly from staff that they have been unable to grieve the deaths of residents or process what has happened in the last year because they are working too much and being asked to perform tasks outside of their regular job duties. Additionally, with staff strained, they are unable to provide quality care to residents.

The residents are receiving less care and attention because there are less people doing the work. There have been reports of more residents dying, not from COVID, but from other diseases because they are receiving less attention from staff. As a result of not receiving adequate care, residents are unable to have enough support or encouragement to perform activities of daily living or get outside and participate in activities.

The nursing home and skilled nursing facilities have been receiving a lot of bad press lately. I haven't seen a positive view of nursing homes in the news in over a year. Therefore, the bad press combined with COVID infections and regulations has not helped but hindered the number of people wanting to work in senior citizen healthcare. Is there a way to develop government funded trade school type training for healthcare workers and a stipend if you continue your education and get a college degree in a said career? Training could include basic healthcare terminology; understanding CMS, dept of health and other regulatory requirements; and the health requirements and special needs of people over 60.

Best regards,
Rhonda M Butler, EdD (she/her/hers)

Engagement Coordinator, One to One Program
Senior Services