



The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bob Casey
Chairman
Senate Aging Committee
Washington D.C. 20510

October 11, 2021

Dear Senators Wyden and Casey:

On behalf of the Alzheimer's Association and the Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM), including our nationwide network of advocates, thank you for your continued leadership on issues and legislation important to Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementia, and to their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association and AIM write today in strong support of the Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act which would increase transparency, accountability, and oversight in nursing homes, improve staffing, and support innovation in the structure and culture of these facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to create additional challenges for people living with dementia, their families and caregivers. These challenges are particularly being felt in long-term care settings. Nursing homes and assisted living communities are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis, where 48 percent of nursing home residents are living with dementia, and 42 percent of residents in residential care facilities have Alzheimer's or another dementia. Residents with dementia are particularly susceptible to COVID-19 due to their typical age, their significantly increased likelihood of coexisting chronic conditions, and the community nature of long-term care settings. Across the country these facilities, their staff, and their residents are experiencing a crisis due to a lack of transparency, an inability to access the necessary testing, inaccurate reporting and more. According to some estimates, more than 180,000 residents and workers have died from the coronavirus at nursing homes and other long-term care communities.

The Nursing Home Improvement and Accountability Act would make important changes to nursing homes including requiring them to meet minimum staffing standards, ensure a Registered Nurse (RN) is available 24 hours a day, require a full time infection control and prevention specialist, and provide additional resources through Medicaid to support these care and staffing improvements and raise wages. Additionally, the legislation takes a number of steps to increase transparency and accountability by improving data collection, providing better information to residents and their families, and enhancing the effectiveness of state surveys. These crucial provisions are consistent with the Alzheimer's Association's recently released policy recommendations, *Improving the State and Federal Response to COVID-19 in Long Term Care Settings*.

Again, the Alzheimer's Association and AIM deeply appreciate your continued leadership on behalf of all Americans living with Alzheimer's and other dementia. If you have any questions about this or any other legislation, please contact Rachel Conant, Vice President of Federal Affairs, at rconant@alz-aim.org or at 202.638.7121.

Sincerely,

Robert Egge
Chief Public Policy Officer
Executive Vice President, Government Affairs
Alzheimer's Association