

To: DC Coalition on Long-Term Care
FR: Judith Levy, Convenor
Claudia Schlosberg, Chair, Workforce Subcommittee
RE: **Action Alert** regarding Emergency Legislation to Preserve the Health Care Workforce
DT: October 5, 2021

We need your support to enact Emergency Legislation to Preserve the Health Care Workforce. During the pandemic, testing and training for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) and Home Health Aides (HHAs) was shut down for months. To meet staffing needs, the Board of Nursing granted waivers allowing health care entities to hire CNAs and HHAs who were licensed in other jurisdictions. Those waivers have ended and based upon a survey that the LTC Coalition just completed, long-term care providers will lose hundreds of staff as a result. Councilmember Vincent Gray has introduced the Preserve our Healthcare Workforce Emergency Amendment Act of 2021. This emergency legislation extends those waivers until August 10, giving those CNAs and HHAs time to get their DC certification.

Please call or write your Council Members today to ask them to support this Bill.

Background - During the Public Health Emergency, the schools that are approved to train new home Health Aide and Certified Nursing Homes were shuttered. Once they were able to offer on-line classes, they still were unable to offer clinical skills training. Testing sites were also shuttered for a time and could not test for clinical proficiencies. The Board of Nursing offered providers a number of waivers that offered some flexibility that enabled DC Nursing Homes, Assisted Living and Home Health Agencies to hire and retain direct care staff. However, these waivers ended as of September 30, 2021. As a result, many LTSS providers are facing the loss of significant numbers of direct care staff. In a recent, very limited, survey of LTSS providers, 86% of respondents stated they would be losing significant numbers of staff. Specifically, 14 of 21 respondents estimated they would be losing a total of 170 CNAs, while another four respondents reported they would be losing 103 HHAs. These losses will have a devastating impact on the ability of LTSS providers to meet the care needs of District seniors and people with disabilities.

Emergency Legislation. -The DC Council has introduced Emergency Legislation called the “Preserve of Healthcare Workforce Emergency Amendment Act of 2021. This bill amends the DC Health Occupations Revision Act (HORA) to allow individuals who are not licensed or certified in the District of Columbia to continue to engage in the proactive of providing healthcare in the District of Columbia until August 10, 2022, provided the individual:

- (1) is licensed, registered or certified and in in good standing in another jurisdiction;
- (2) is fully vaccinated against COVID 19 or has been granted a medical or religious exemption from the Department of Health;
- (3) Has not been disciplined is by a District of Columbia health occupation board; and
- (4) provides healthcare services in a licensed or certified health care entity.

Although we know that there are many other issues pertaining to licensure that need attention, the DC Coalition for Long-Term Care strongly supports this emergency legislation to avoid the loss of hundreds of workers. Please contact members of the Council today and urge them to support this Bill.

Please send your emails to or call:

COUNCILMEMBERS

- Council Chairman, Phil Mendelson, pmendelson@dccouncil.us, Telephone 202-724-8032, Evan cash Leg Dirs. Ecash@dccouncil.us, Tel No. 202-724-7002; Christine Setlow, Sep Committee Director, csetlow@dccouncil.us, Tel No. 202-724-4865
- AT-Large Councilmember, Elissa Silverman, esilverman@dccouncil.us, 724-7772; Emily Price (Staff), eprice@dccouncil.us. (Chair, Labor and Workforce Committee)
- At-Large Councilmember Christina Henderson, chenderson@dccouncil.us, Mike Shaffermshaffer@dccouncil.us 202-724-8105 or Thomas (TJ) Maloney@dccouncil.us 202-724-8105, (Labor and Workforce Committee; Committee on Health)
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- At-large Councilmember Anita Bonds, abonds@dccouncil.us. (Oversees DACL)
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- Ward 7, Vincent Gray, Vgray@dccouncil.us, Chair, Committee on Health
- Ward 8, Trayon White, Sr., twhite@dccouncil.us (Committee on Labor and Workforce Development, Wanda Lockridge Chief of Staff Email: wlockridge@dccouncil.us; Telephone: (202)724-8045; Tracey Jackson Legislative Director Email: tjackson@dccouncil.usTelephone: 202-724-8045;