

Survey Regarding Loss of Waivers and Vaccine Mandate on LTSS Staffing

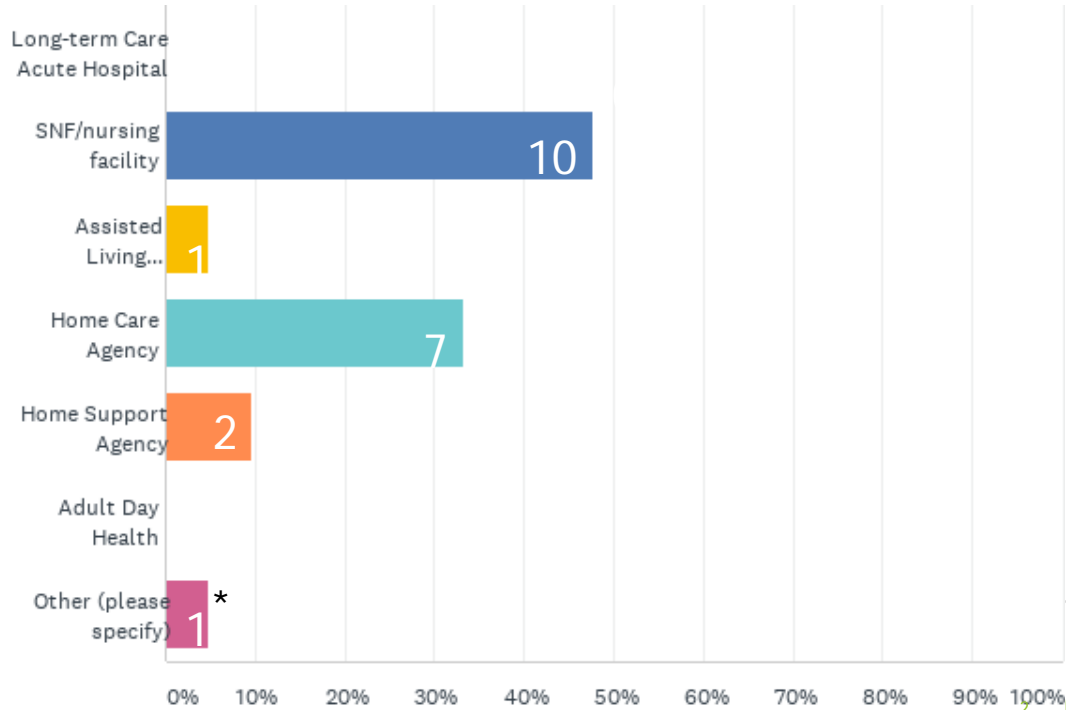
Prepared by Castle Hill Consulting, LLC
For the DC Coalition on Long Term Care
Workforce Subcommittee

castlehconsulting@gmail.com

202-486-0822

► October 03, 2021

Twenty-one unique LTSS providers responded



* SNF and ALF

BACKGROUND

- ▶ During the Public Health Emergency, DC Health granted waivers allowing DC Health Care Providers to hire nurses, certified nursing assistances and home health aides who were not licensed or certified in DC to work in DC health care facilities to address critical staffing shortages.
- ▶ Those waivers have now expired.
- ▶ The DC Coalition for Long Term Care, working in partnership with the DC Health Care Association, Leading Age DC, the DC Home Health Association and the Maryland National Capital Home Care Association, sent out a short survey to understand the impact. We also asked about the impact of the vaccine mandate.
- ▶ Although response was limited, those who did respond estimated they would lose significant numbers of staff.
- ▶ Such losses would have a devastating impact on the care of seniors and people with disabilities.

The Impact of Waivers Expiring

The 21 respondents estimated they would be losing a total of 312 staff, including 29 nurses and 273 direct care workers (CNAs and HHAs).

Of 21 respondents, 7 reported they expect to lose a total of 29 nurses.

Of 21 respondents, 14 reported they expect to lose a total of 170 CNAs.

- Eight of these 14 respondents, reported that they expect to lose 10 or more CNAs.

Of 21 respondents, 4 reported that they expect to lose a total of 103 HHAs.



Impact of the Vaccine Mandate

- ▶ Of 21 respondents, 16 reported they would lose a total of more than 269 staff.

We asked Respondents to share comments - Here is what they said:

► There was already a caregiver shortage in DC during the pandemic. The Board of Nursing closed its Person-Vue testing from March 2020 until September 14th. HHA Schools did not open and those that were open could only provide the written exam, so no new students could get licenses during the pandemic. Again, the Board of Nursing closed the licensing from March 2020 until September 2021, causing the shortage as well as having all home care agencies pull from the same caregiver pool- which was already limited. Now, the CNAs who were hired to help are being taken away unless they go through some testing and applications, which costs money, which they don't have. Lastly, the vaccine mandate is also adding to the shortage.

► How are home care agencies expected to continue operations without enough caregivers (hence, not being able to accept any new clients)?

More Comments:

► The shortage of DC HHA's is extreme at this point. It will be years before we can catch up by providing schooling to folks who want to become aides in DC. The only way to service DC's most vulnerable citizens is to provide the opportunity for Maryland and VA aides to work in DC and to allow DC CNA's to work in homes. This is a huge crisis. We desperately need the help of the Board of Nursing and the DC Department of Health.

More Comments:

- ▶ For the Home Support Agency (HSA) license, DCHHAs are the only ones who are permitted to provide care. Its so limiting because such a shortage of DCHHAs. DCDOH needs to allow DC CNAs and MD CNAs to provide care. After all, the HSA license doesn't allow skilled care, so the care provided is ADLs and companionship, which DC CNAs and MD CNAs are more than capable of providing. Common sense needs to prevail.
- ▶ The lack of care providers will result in complete health care chaos, and too many beneficiaries will be in danger of being discharged and hospitalized.

The DC Council is proposing the “Preserve our Healthcare Workforce Emergency Amendment Act of 2021” to extend the waivers until August 10, 2022.

While the extension of the Waivers does not resolve all issues, it is a critical first step needed to ensure that hundreds of health care workers do not lose their jobs and District residents, including seniors and people with disabilities, will continue to receive needed services.