



DC Coalition on Long Term Care
C/O of IONA SENIOR SERVICES
4125 Albemarle Street NW
Washington, DC 20016

September 12, 2023

Ayanna Bennett, MD, MSPH, FAAP
Acting Director
DC Health
899 North Capital Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Director Bennett:

On behalf of the DC Coalition on Long Term Care, I want to welcome you to the District of Columbia. For more than two decades, the Coalition on Long Term Care has brought together diverse constituencies including consumers, advocates, health care providers and the workforce, to advocate to improve the quality and expand access to long-term care ensuring that DC residents can age safely and with dignity in their community.

DC Health plays a critical role in assuring the District residents have access to quality long-term care services and supports through the licensure of health care facilities and through the licensure and certification of health professionals. Over the years, we have greatly appreciated the ability to work with DOH staff, particularly within the Division of Facility Licensure, and the Board of Nursing. However, progress on critical reforms needed to address the direct care, healthcare workforce crisis has been slow. In advance of your confirmation hearing, we wanted you to have a copy of a letter that we sent to the DC Council, Committee on Health on July 25, 2023, seeking assistance to move the District forward on several key initiatives, two of which fall under the purview of DC Health. These include:

1. The need for DC Health to approve medication aide training programs, an advanced credential for CNAs and HHA that represents a real step in a career ladder and higher pay for direct care workers. This credential has been “on the books” since 2019, but despite resident need and employer demand, the DC government has failed to approve any training programs.

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2. The need for DC Health to bring forward legislative reforms to update certification requirements and processes for CNAs and HHAs. The Coalition supports lowering the age of aides to 16, creating a universal credential and making it easier for out-of-District aides to work in DC, among others.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the critical challenges the District faces to provide quality of care for a growing population of older adults and people with disabilities. We hope that we can find ways to collaborate to address these challenges together.

Our Workforce Subcommittee meets virtually every Tuesday at 9:00 am and we warmly extend an invitation to you to join us at one of our meetings. However, if joining one of our meetings is not feasible, we are happy to work with your scheduler to find a time on your busy calendar that is convenient to you.

Best regards,

Claudia Schlosberg

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Encl: Letter to Christina Henderson, Chair,
Committee on Health
Council for the District of Columbia