



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Senator John Hickenlooper  
374 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Michael Bennet  
261 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

March 4, 2024

Senators Hickenlooper and Bennet,

We are writing to you today both as concerned citizens and as County Commissioners for Mesa County. We are concerned about proposed federal rulemaking by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services that will negatively impact Colorado seniors. A new staffing mandate for nursing homes will worsen workforce shortages facing the long-term care sector and limit access to care for our seniors.

The rule amounts to an unfunded mandate, and will not help nursing homes increase their staffing levels. Nursing homes are facing a historic staffing shortage like many other healthcare sectors, but they are feeling the impact more severely. Nursing homes have lost [15 percent](#) of their entire workforce since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and aren't expected to fully rebuild until 2026.

Nursing homes in Colorado cannot meet this staffing requirement as it stands - there aren't enough people with the necessary qualifications and licenses in the labor force to meet the demand. Long-term care facilities will need to hire thousands more nurses and nursing aides to meet this mandate. One analysis finds that [90 percent](#) of nursing homes in our state cannot meet the proposed rule in its current form.

Nursing homes that serve residents from all over Western Colorado that are located in Mesa County include:

- La Villa Grande Care Center – Grand Junction
- Eagle Ridge Post Acute Care – Grand Junction
- The Center at Foresight – Grand Junction
- Mesa Manor Center – Grand Junction
- Mantey Heights Rehabilitation & Care Center – Grand Junction
- Larchwood Inns – Grand Junction
- Orchard Valley Health and Rehabilitation Center – Palisade

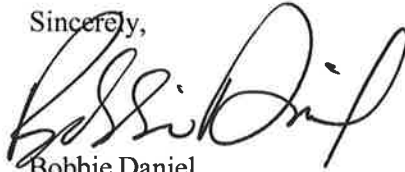
A one-size-fits-all approach will force facilities to limit their admissions or close down altogether. When nursing homes do not have the necessary staff, they may have to turn away prospective residents or in the worst cases, fully shut down.

A nursing home cannot operate unless they have the caregivers necessary to provide each resident with the care they need. This will be especially devastating to rural and underserved communities where access to care is already limited.

Let's not put seniors in harm's way by letting this policy become final. Nursing homes need substantial funding and supportive programs to help them recruit and retain a strong workforce, and the time to provide this is now. This is how we can really improve nursing home care and better prepare ourselves for the future.

Many of your colleagues have already expressed concerns over the staffing mandate for nursing homes and have urged the Biden Administration to change this flawed policy before it becomes final. We hope you will join them. An impossible-to-meet mandate will only limit access to care for our seniors, and we encourage you to support policies and programs that help nursing homes build a strong pipeline of caregivers for years to come.

Sincerely,



Bobbie Daniel  
Chair, Mesa County Commissioner



Janet Rowland  
Commissioner



Cody Davis  
Commissioner