

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 11, 2025

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## **Feb. 14 Rally on Capitol Steps Calls for Sustainable Long-Term Care in Washington**

*Skilled Nursing, Assisted Living caregivers to call on Legislature to “Have a Heart for Seniors and Caregivers”*

*Rally Organized by Washington Health Care Association, LeadingAge Washington, Service Employees International Union Local 775*

**WHEN:** 12:30 PM, Friday, February 14, 2025 (hospitality tent to open at 11am at the base of the Capitol’s north stairs)

**WHERE:** Capitol Steps, 416 Sid Snyder Ave SW, Olympia, WA 98504

**ATTN:** Information attached on Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing in Washington State. Information includes specific advocacy on legislation and funding proposals before the State Legislature.

OLYMPIA – On Valentine’s Day 2025, caregivers in Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living will call on state lawmakers to “have a heart” for seniors and caregivers. In rallying on the Capitol Steps, attendees will provide Valentine’s Day refreshments throughout the afternoon to lawmakers and staff to highlight the critical need for our state to adopt a sustainable approach for supporting a spectrum of long-term care.

### **Information on these two types of long-term care, statements**

#### Facts on Assisted Living

Assisted Living provides 24/7 supervision that includes housekeeping, daily personal care, intermittent nursing, medication assistance, social activities, transportation support and meals. Those in Assisted Living often live in private apartments. Older adults in Assisted Living are:

- 30% are 74-84 years old, 55% are 85+
- 85% require medication assistance (avg. of 12-15 daily medications)
- 54% have Alzheimer’s/dementia
- 72% identify as female

- 18.8% rely on Medicaid (access is low due to insufficient state investment in Medicaid)
  - Private pay rates are increasing in order to subsidize low state Medicaid investments

Additional information on Assisted Living in Washington is attached to this media advisory.

### Skilled Nursing Facilities

Skilled Nursing Facilities provide post-surgery therapies, transportation for on-going treatments (e.g. chemotherapy, dialysis), care for intense needs related to chronic medical treatment, diet (liquid, soft, tube), complex wound care, bowel/bladder programs, oxygen therapies and condition management (e.g. cancer, kidney failure, tracheotomy). Adults in Skilled Nursing Facilities are:

- 77 years old, on average
- 59% have moderate/high cognitive impairment, 42% diagnosed with Alzheimer's/dementia
- 32% are obese, 85% are bladder incontinent, 70% are bowel incontinent, 75% have hypertension and 28% have congestive heart failure
- 17% are bedfast
- 7,800 residents rely on Medicaid

Additional information on Skilled Nursing in Washington is attached to this media advisory.

“Our state should be proud of the investments that we have made to provide care for older adults,” **said Carma Matti-Jackson, CEO of the Washington Health Care Association.** “As our population ages and the need increases, we cannot take our leadership for granted. We are proud to work alongside nurses, administrators and state leaders as partners in supporting effective, inclusive and viable long-term care in our state.”

“We cannot take quality care for granted for our state’s older adults,” **said Sterling Harders, President of SEIU 775.** “Quality care relies on quality direct care staff. If we fail to invest in Skilled Nursing Facilities, we are failing to invest in quality and the people who proudly serve our family members in communities across our state.”

“Investments in Assisted Living are direct investments in our local communities, economies, workers and health,” **said Glen Melin, CEO of LeadingAge WA.** “Those who rely on Medicaid depend on adequate Assisted Living funding for their housing and food security.”

### About Washington Health Care Association

Washington Health Care Association is a nonprofit professional association for the long-term care community in Washington, representing 156 Skilled Nursing and 404 Assisted Living providers across the state. In partnership with these member facilities and business partners, WHCA promotes and advocates for healthy, affordable and ethical long-term care at the state and federal levels. For more information, please visit [whca.org](http://whca.org).

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