

The Seattle Times

WA must leverage Medicaid funds for long-term care residents

[Guest Editorial](#) by Denney Austin, **March 5, 2025**

“In Washington, we are lucky to have 18,000...outstanding people working in our communities’ nursing homes, which is why we’re [ranked in the Top 10 states](#) for overall quality. However, our luck is going to run out if the state Legislature does not take action and stabilize **the long-term care workforce crisis created by a lack of state investment.**”

“Long-term care facilities, including skilled nursing facilities, provide critical care to almost 13,000 older adults in Washington. **Two-thirds of nursing home residents rely on Medicaid funding** set by the state Legislature.”

“The solutions are on the table for state legislators. **We must adopt annual rebasing legislation** — setting the Medicaid rate to reflect the current costs for providing care — that allows long-term care providers to compete for workers by offering competitive wages. Additionally, we **must ensure that benefits for these workers are affordable** by adopting the [Essential Worker Healthcare Program.](#)”

Denney Austin works as a consultant to long-term care facilities and as an interim administrator. He has served as the CEO of multiple large long-term care communities across Washington.

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

State must invest in workforce for skilled nursing facilities

[Guest Editorial](#) by Cole Casarez and Dell Workman, **February 21, 2025**

“You don’t have to work in long-term care to know the painful realities of high inflation in recent years. The real costs for supporting patients with Medicaid exceed state funding by **more than \$60 million per year across the 197 Skilled Nursing Facilities in Washington.** This threatens our state’s ability to lower barriers to accessing long-term care for those who need it.”

“The State Legislature is currently considering permanent solutions to stop relying on temporary fixes that have acted much like a single band-aid on a bleeding wound. Together, as an administrator and a caregiver, we urge them to permanently adopt annual Medicaid rebasing legislation to **keep up with the rising costs** of today’s world. Furthermore, it is essential that **we address the long-term workforce crisis** by passing the Essential Worker Healthcare Program.”

Cole Casarez is a certified nursing assistant and SEIU 775 member at North Central Care Center in Spokane and has served his community as a CNA for 10 years.

Dell Workman is an administrator at North Central Care Center in Spokane and is celebrating his 40th year in the field that his grandmother inspired him to enter.