



Iowa Health Care Association
Iowa Center for Assisted Living
Iowa Center for Home Care

For Immediate Release: September 13, 2021

Contact: Lori Ristau,
Senior Vice President, Strategic Communications
800-422-3106 | lori@iowahealthcare.org

Statement from IHCA President & CEO Brent Willett Regarding Biden Administration Updated Call for Mandatory Nursing Home Staff Vaccination

On September 9 the Biden Administration announced updates to its previously called-for nursing home staff vaccination mandate. The updates take into consideration feedback provided by the nursing home sector in recent days, including the nearly 100 Iowa nursing home providers who submitted comment letters to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services demonstrating their deep concern about the catastrophic workforce consequences of an inoperative mandate.

While the Iowa Health Care Association (IHCA) is encouraged by the Administration's consideration of feedback from long-term care providers in making its mandate inclusive of other Medicare and Medicaid health care providers, the proposed rule still falls short of workable, and more must be done to avert a needless exacerbation of the existing workforce crisis in long-term care.

The Administration has announced mandates for much of the rest of the economy, but they include test-out provisions for most Americans, something our association has called for to be included in any nursing home mandate for weeks. We are deeply concerned that without a test-out option available for those who work in health care settings, the workforce crisis in Iowa's long-term care centers will worsen and facilities may face closure due to lack of available staff. Iowa long-term care facilities depend not only on medical personnel, but also support staff in departments such as dietary, housekeeping and maintenance. Retaining these critical staff functions in nursing homes will be increasingly difficult without a test-out option for these employees like what would be available to them in other workplace settings.

We renew our call to the Biden Administration to include a test-out option for staff members of long-term care facilities, to extend its implementation timeline to provide reasonable time for facilities to comply, and for \$6 billion in additional funding to be released to assist providers in mitigating an even more difficult workforce shortage than we face today.

Iowa nursing homes currently employ more than 27,000 Iowans, who provide skilled nursing care for nearly 20,000 Iowans.

About the Iowa Health Care Association

The Iowa Health Care Association (IHCA) and its divisions, Iowa Center for Assisted Living (ICAL) and Iowa Center for Home Care (IHC) represent 790 Iowa organizations that provide long-term care to Iowans through nursing facilities, assisted living, residential care, senior living communities and home health agencies.

