

As COVID-19 Cases and Deaths Climb, New AARP Analysis Reveals Iowa Nursing Homes Still Lack Adequate Staff & PPE

The Time is Now to Develop a Statewide Action Plan to Address Staffing crisis

Des Moines—As COVID-19 cases in Iowa continue to climb, AARP renewed its call for Governor Reynolds and legislators to better protect nursing home residents and staff from the coronavirus. The latest release of the [AARP Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard](#) finds alarming trends in Iowa’s nursing homes, including rising resident cases and deaths, continuing shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), rising staff shortages.

Using data released by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services—which is self-reported by nursing homes—the AARP Public Policy Institute, in collaboration with the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University in Ohio, created the AARP Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard to provide four-week snapshots of the virus’ infiltration into nursing homes and impact on nursing home residents and staff. This second dashboard aggregates and analyzes data from nursing homes covering three 4-week time intervals from mid-summer into fall: July 26-Aug. 23, Aug. 24-Sept. 20, and Sept. 21-Oct. 18.

For the period from Sept. 21-Oct. 18, AARP’s dashboard reports that Iowa nursing homes had:

- 42.8% of nursing homes with staffing shortages, up from 39.6%
- 5.3 staff COVID-19 cases per 100 residents, up from 3.7
- 38.1% of nursing homes without a 1-week supply of PPE, down from 42.6%, but still worse than national average and troublingly high
- 4.8 COVID-19 cases per 100 residents, up from 2.1 in the previous four-week period
- 0.7 COVID-19 deaths per 100 residents, up from .41

“Nine months since COVID-19 entered nursing homes, cases are rising again, and facilities still don’t have the PPE and staffing needed to protect residents,” said AARP State Director Brad Anderson. “This is a tragedy that must be addressed. Our state leaders need to act to keep residents safe by finally creating a public plan to address Iowa’s nursing home crisis, starting with staffing.”

AARP is calling for the following steps to be taken immediately:

- Develop a plan to address Iowa’s nursing home staffing shortage;
- Create a central database of direct care workers by expanding Iowa’s existing nurse aide registry
- Deploy the Iowa National Guard to nursing homes and assisted living centers to assist with staffing needs like point of contact testing.

Anderson added: “COVID-19 is still spreading in the community, and Iowa now has triple digit numbers of nursing homes with outbreaks. Continuing shortages of staff and PPE mean these facilities aren’t prepared for another wave. Iowa nursing homes have received over \$96 million in state and federal funding intended to keep residents safe, but as this dashboard demonstrates, too many Iowa measures continue to move in the wrong direction. Our state leaders must hold facilities accountable and ensure our taxpayer dollars are used to save lives, and right now that means focusing those dollars immediately on protecting residents and supporting and retaining staff.”

The AARP Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard will continue to be updated every four weeks. The complete dashboard is available at aarp.org/nursinghomedashboard.

More resources and information on COVID-19 and nursing homes can be found at aarp.org/nursinghomes.

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