



To: Sen. Vicki Schmidt, Chair, and Members,  
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee  
From: Debra Zehr, President and CEO  
Date: March 13, 2012

### Testimony Regarding Nursing Home Staffing

Thank you, Madam Chair and Members of the Committee. I am Debra Zehr, President and CEO of LeadingAge Kansas, formerly known as KAHSA. Our 160 members include not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living and residential health care residences, homes plus, low income housing, licensed home health agencies and other community based service programs throughout Kansas.

Under current state regulations, nursing facilities are required to provide a minimum daily average of 1.85 total hours of nursing care per resident day, with a weekly average of 2 hours per resident. Over the last decade statewide averages for nursing care hours per resident have been well above this minimum, and in fact, have been trending upward:

	<b>NFP Average Nsg hrs/res/day</b>	<b>State Average Nsg hrs/res/day</b>
<b>2002</b>	3.65	3.42
<b>2004</b>	3.9	3.6
<b>2006</b>	4.01	3.7
<b>2008</b>	3.5	3.07
<b>2010</b>	4.31	3.84

Investment in staffing is one of the many important ways LeadingAge Kansas members work to ensure quality care for nursing home residents. Our members consistently lead the State in staffing numbers, and the amount of nursing care hours per resident day. However, steep funding barriers and workforce shortages make maintaining staffing rates a constant struggle. Workforce challenges are particularly acute for our members in rural areas of the State.

We are aware that some advocacy groups have called for a significant increase in the minimum staffing levels required for nursing homes. While our members would agree that staffing is one of many important factors in quality care, we also hope that solutions to address the serious challenges in adequate funding and workforce are given equal attention when considering this issue.

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Thank you so much for your time. I would be happy to stand for questions.