



# SKILLED NURSING CARE COALITION

## ISSUE BRIEF

### Background:

The Ohio Skilled Nursing Care Coalition is comprised of three associations which represent the continuum of long-term care providers and the people they serve: the Ohio Health Care Association (OHCA), the Association of Ohio Philanthropic Homes, Housing, and Services for the Aged (AOPHA), and the Ohio Academy of Nursing Homes (OANH). The purpose of the coalition is twofold:

1. To advocate for fair and reasonable government funding for frail seniors and others who rely on government for their health care needs in settings they choose and in which their needs can be reasonably accommodated.
2. To provide education for legislators, media, and public on the changing field of senior services, particularly the change of skilled nursing facilities to the post acute care centers they have become.

### Issue:

The Ohio Skilled Nursing Care Coalition supports Governor Strickland's Budget Proposal to provide additional funding for the expansion of PASSPORT and community based care for Ohio's older and disabled citizens. However, the Coalition cautions that without additional funding for skilled nursing facilities, Ohio is jeopardizing its ability to provide quality skilled care for some of the frailest and ill of our older and most vulnerable Ohioans. **The Governor's budget provides no increases for skilled nursing care.**

### Action:

Contact your local legislators as soon as possible and let them know that the lack of additional funding and lack of action on direct care, peer groups, and capital has a direct impact on the care you provide residents. For Democrats, please ask them to contact Governor Strickland as a colleague and let him know that they are concerned that their constituents have been left out. For Republicans, ask them to increase skilled nursing care funding as the administration did for hospitals and other parts of the health care continuum. **We are asking for a 3 percent increase in funding for each year in the biennium budget. This amounts to 1% over the appropriation for skilled nursing facilities from the last budget (House Bill 66).**

### Key Points:

- The Governor stated that he intends to take care of the vulnerable populations in Ohio, **but he has not included funding for one of the most vulnerable populations, skilled nursing facility residents.**
- Other parts of the continuum of care (including hospitals and community providers) are receiving rate increases under the budget, but not SNFs.
- Skilled nursing facilities need additional Medicaid funding to continue providing quality services.
- If the Governor's budget goes unchanged, skilled nursing facilities will have to choose between decreasing staffing and limiting services. Either choice is bad for quality and continuity of care.
- We believe there needs to be a 3% increase in funding to address the flaws in the nursing home reimbursement formula. (Examples of the flawed methodology include: direct care, capital costs, peer groups, etc.)

### Rationale:

Without changes to the current pricing methodology many skilled service providers will receive decreased reimbursement. This is especially true of inner-city facilities which are almost 100% Medicaid. Without these skilled facilities, many inner-city residents will not have access to their healthcare needs close to home. Under the last budget, skilled nursing facilities statewide were held to flat rates, leaving them well under the pace of inflation. Medicaid funding for skilled nursing facilities is under budget by approximately \$200 million in the current biennium. There are no provisions for additional government unfunded mandates such as increase in minimum wages.

### Conclusion:

The residents who receive care and services in skilled nursing facilities deserve quality care and life that comes from adequate staffing and a pleasant environment. The government must adequately fund the entire continuum of care – including skilled nursing facility care – in order to provide the range of services needed by Ohio's vulnerable populations.