ADDRESSING THE LONG TERM CARE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

Workforce recruitment and retention is one of the most pressing challenges confronting long term care providers today. The health care system has experienced a shortage of trained caregivers for critical roles for some time; nurses and nurse aides are among the fastest growing occupations, but supply is not keeping pace. The federal government estimates nearly 27 million people will need some kind of long term care by 2050, magnifying the workforce shortage that already exists. AHCA/NCAL has urged Congress to support innovative programs that will help recruit, retain, and attract workers and is advocating for the following bills and programs that will ensure our nation can support the future workforce needs of the long term care profession.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG)**
  This program currently funds demonstration projects in 22 states to help TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients and other low-income individuals acquire skills, gain employment, and advance up the career ladder in health professions. The grants are set to expire September 30, 2019, however, the Ways and Means Committee has expressed interest to continue funding this program ($85 million yearly).

- **S. 299 Geriatric Workforce Improvement Act**
  Introduced by Senators Collins (R-ME) and Casey (D-PA), this bill would authorize the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) for another five years. The program provides grants to geriatric centers to educate and train doctors, nurses, social workers and other healthcare professionals in the care and treatment of the elderly.

- **HR 1265 Nursing Home Workforce Quality Act**
  Introduced by Representatives Duffy (R-WI) and Peterson (D-MN), legislation would eliminate the mandatory Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training lockout for Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF), and instead allow the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to impose a lockout based on a substandard quality of care.

IMMIGRATION

- **H.R. 1740 Workforce for an Expanding Economy Act**
  AHCA supports this legislation introduced by Congressman Smucker (R-PA) that would provide critical access to new workers and create a commonsense visa system, capped at 85,000 positions annually, that would allow the government to ensure workers and employers are utilizing the system as it was intended. If a U.S. employer is offering a job that American citizens are not available to take, AHCA supports immigration reform that will fill these critical jobs.

- **H.R. 6 Dream Act**
  This legislation, introduced by Representatives Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Velazquez (D-NY) and Clarke (D-NY), provides permanent legal protections and a path to citizenship for “Dreamers” –undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children. It offers protection for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) recipients from deportation, as President Trump terminated TPS for individuals from Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador. AHCA/NCAL wrote to HHS Secretary opposing the decision to terminate TPS.

LOAN FORGIVENESS

- **S. 1045 Nursing Where It’s Needed Act**
  The Nursing Where It’s Needed Act, introduced by Senator Young (R-IN) and Jones (D-AL), provides incentives for nurses to work in rural and underserved areas, where they are in high demand. The loan repayment program under this act pays for 60% of an RN or APN unpaid nursing education debt in exchange for two years of service in a critical shortage area.