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**LEADINGAGE MINNESOTA APPLAUDS REP. FISCHBACH BILL TO STOP UNFUNDED NURSING HOME MANDATES**

*HR 5796 proposes to halt unfunded, unrealistic nursing home staffing mandate from CMS*

**MINNEAPOLIS, MN (Oct. 4, 2023)** – “On behalf of LeadingAge Minnesota, our members, and the seniors they serve, we thank Representative Fischbach for introducing HR 5796, the Protecting Rural Seniors Access to Care Act. She has been a steadfast champion for seniors and their caregivers not just in her district, but across the state, and we applaud her leadership,” said Kari Thurlow, President and CEO of LeadingAge Minnesota, the state’s largest network of senior care professionals.

HR 5796 would halt this unfunded mandate from moving forward at CMS, an action that is in the best interests of Minnesotans. LeadingAge Minnesota’s preliminary analysis estimates that nearly 90% of nursing homes in Minnesota today would not be able to meet the requirements of these ratios. Since 2020 in Minnesota, 24 nursing homes have closed and over 3,000 nursing home beds have been taken out of service, many due to a lack of workers.

Alarming, this unfunded mandate will cost \$7.1 billion nationally per year, and nearly \$84 million per year to Minnesota taxpayers and nursing homes. Each Minnesota nursing home expects costs to increase by \$240,00 in the first year alone.

“CMS’s overreaching regulation sets unattainable requirements that do not contribute to quality. The proposed regulation fails to embrace the unique care models we have implemented in Minnesota and does not honor the meaningful contributions licensed practical nurses and medication aides make to the care of seniors,” Thurlow added. “The proposed rule also fails to acknowledge that the RNs these mandates will require simply don’t exist. Minnesota’s own state economic development data shows that we need over 5,600 registered nurses across all settings; nursing homes alone need 1,200 more nurses. This is before the mandate would even be factored in.”

Minnesota is home to one million seniors, and almost 70% will need care in a long-term care setting in their remaining years.

“It’s our responsibility to ensure they have the care they need when and where they need it, close to home and their loved ones,” concluded Thurlow. “As our population ages and we continue to face ongoing workforce challenges, now is not the time to create new mandates that force nursing homes to hire staff that do not exist.”

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***About LeadingAge Minnesota***

*Driven to transform and enhance the experience of aging, LeadingAge Minnesota is the state’s largest association of organizations serving older adults. Together with more than 55,000 caregivers, our members provide quality care, services and support to approximately 60,000 older adults in independent living, assisted living, adult day, home care and skilled nursing.*

A photo of Kari Thurlow can be found at [https://www.leadingagemn.org/assets/staff/KariThurlow\\_2.jpg](https://www.leadingagemn.org/assets/staff/KariThurlow_2.jpg)