

Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

September 8, 2025

Subject: CMS Nursing Home Staffing Campaign

Dear Governors,

I am writing to invite you to take advantage of a great opportunity to use federal and state funds collected from Civil Monetary Penalties to improve nursing home staffing. Adequate nursing home staffing has been a longstanding issue, impacting the quality of care for nursing home residents in all states. To help address this, CMS announced we will invest over \$75 million to implement a nursing home staffing campaign to increase the number of nurses working in nursing homes. We are reiterating our commitment to this campaign and working to engage stakeholders, including states, as we put it into action. Through this campaign, CMS will:

- Provide financial incentives for nurses to work in nursing homes, such as tuition reimbursement and stipends;
- Work with states to make it easier for individuals to enroll in free, state-approved certified nurse aide training programs; and
- Launch an awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of working in nursing homes—such as the rewarding experience and availability of career progression—and resources available to help individuals pursue nursing.

The funding comes from collected civil money penalties (CMPs) imposed on Medicare and Medicaid nursing homes for certain types of noncompliance with health and safety standards. These collected amounts are split between CMS and states to reinvest in projects that improve nursing home care and residents' quality of life. Collectively, CMS and states have millions of dollars that – by law – can only be spent on programs that benefit residents and improve nursing home quality.¹ This puts us in a unique position where we can substantively invest in this staffing campaign to improve nursing home quality and drive more students into health care careers.

States are critical partners in improving nursing home quality. We urge states to join us by investing a portion of your collected CMP funds to bolster the campaign in your state. State-based CMP funds can be used to increase the number of financial incentives available to recruit more nurses in your state. CMS will proportionally match what your state contributes, with those funds allocated back to recruiting nurses for your nursing homes.

¹Social Security Act, [Sections 1819\(h\)\(2\)\(B\)\(ii\)\(IV\)\(ff\)](#) and [Sections 1919\(h\)\(2\)\(A\)\(ii\)](#) and [1919\(h\)\(3\)\(C\)\(ii\)\(IV\)\(ff\)](#).

We also encourage states to improve their state-approved nurse aide training competency and evaluation programs (NATCEPs). For example, CMS will approve the use of state-based CMPs to enhance their NATCEP websites, making it easier for individuals to enroll, obtain free training, or receive reimbursement for training costs. We remind states that there is a prohibition on charging individuals for any portion of the NATCEP, and individuals can receive reimbursement for training costs based on their employment in a nursing home.² States should remove any barriers, administrative or financial, that could impede an individual from enrolling in a training program. Also, states can get reimbursed for a portion of their costs to administer these programs through Federal Financial Participation (FFP).³

This is a great opportunity to strengthen the quality of care in nursing homes, especially in areas where recruiting nurses is exceptionally challenging, such as in rural areas. We're excited to partner with you on this program, which will ultimately improve the quality of care for nursing home residents.

Please have your staff email NHSC@cms.hhs.gov by **Friday, October 3rd** for more information and to partner with us on this important initiative.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DR Oz', with a stylized flourish.

Dr. Oz

² [42 CFR 483.152\(c\), 483.154\(c\)\(2\) and \(3\)](#).

³ [State Operations Manual for state agencies, Chapter 4 Section 4543](#), and the [State Medicaid Manual Chapter 2, Section 2514](#).