

## **Legislators must act now to save long-term care in Iowa**

*By Grace Maitland, administrator of Grandview Heights Rehab and Healthcare in Marshalltown, Iowa*

Iowa's legislature is contemplating the state's budget right now, and they must significantly increase Medicaid reimbursement for long-term care facilities. The funding will keep long-term care local, benefiting families and communities.

More than half of Iowans in nursing facilities rely on Medicaid for the cost of their care. Local providers are reimbursed for these costs, but in 2022 the Medicaid rate covered just 80 percent. The gap is unsustainable.

Iowa nursing home closures are on the rise. If we don't act now, more hard-working Iowans will have to drive to the nearest nursing home in a city miles away to have dinner with their aging parents.

Already, we are seeing providers limit admissions. At Grandview Heights, we take referrals from communities outside Marshalltown as our peers work to provide care with the resources available.

Access to long-term care is threatened as the need for care is growing. There are over 20,000 Iowans receiving long-term care in 423 nursing facilities. Over half a million people in Iowa are over 65, and it is estimated that population will account for 20% of the state's total population by 2050. Demand for long-term care is projected to increase by 16.7% by 2030, and an additional 17.6% by 2035.

The Koonce family has owned and operated Grandview Heights since 1975, offering a range of services to meet community needs in Marshalltown and beyond. It's my privilege to lead a growing team dedicated to caring for our neighbors. We must honor the commitment of Iowans to care for each other, and we must deliver quality care for deserving residents.

Iowa's legislature must significantly increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for long-term care facilities. Let's come together and ensure that our seniors receive the care they need and deserve.

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