June

Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) is a statewide not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of long-term care for older Kansans in nursing and assisted facilities as well as those who live in their own homes. KABC is not a provider of government-funded services. For 45 years it has been a resource and advocate for older adults and families and providing consumer-focused information on aging and quality care issues for policy makers.

To give our members an opportunity to comment on the proposed staffing standards, we sent out a short survey. We received 40 responses to the following questions:

- Do you or a family member have a story or experience that speaks to the benefits of adequate staffing in long care facilities to residents? Yes: 30; No: 10

- Many responses reflected concerns understaffing and under qualified staff. Which in their opinion translated too poor and abysmal care provided to residents.

- In your experience, did staff caring for the resident seem to have appropriate support and training needed? Yes: 9; No: 24

- A summary of responses to this question, even the staff members who are well-meaning, hardworking and doing their best were only given minimal training and the time in their work day wasn’t enough to provide quality care to every resident.

- In your experience, would it have been better for the resident to have 24/7 access to a registered nurse? Yes: 22; No: 11;

- Responses trended that care would improve if LPNs and CNAs focused on task oriented work and RN’s were available for treatment and care planning.

- In your experience, did staffing improve as a result of the additional funding provided by the federal and state government? Yes: 6; No: 22

- Very few responses noted that any improvement resulted from the additional funding received from federal and state government.

- In your experience, was the facility responsive to concerns expressed about staffing or quality of care? Yes: 12; No: 20

We did receive some responses that conveyed that the facility wanted to address staffing issues better however applicants willing to take positions weren’t available. We also receive responses that
did not experience the same commitment to improving the staffing issues. Others mentioned that better community care options would be beneficial.

A couple of specific comments to our questions were:
Did the resident receive the adequate staffing to meet their needs? What was your sense of how facilities were staffed? How did this impact the quality of care resident received?
A: My dad’s facility was understaffed, they couldn’t respond urgently when he needed to use the bathroom. He had Alzheimer’s and acted out/got irritable with staff. No one realized he was near the end of his life. Their solution was to send him to a behavioral hospital for evaluation. When he was released back to the facility, he died a week later. He had been exhibit terminal restlessness, but staff failed to recognize that.

Did staff caring for the resident seem to have appropriate support & training needed?
A: NO. Staff members seemed unfamiliar with advanced Alzheimer’s and how that impacts behavior.

In your experience, did the resident receive the adequate staffing to meet their needs?
A: Understaffed, by poorly trained nursing assistants. Rude, overworked, unprofessional with no understanding of HIPAA.

Would the resident have been better served in the community?
A: Facility admin want to cover expenses and make a profit. They will pay the lowest wage the market will withstand. Adequate staffing starts with a fundamental living wage for all employees.