

# Health Care News & Notes

## Improved Post-Acute and Long-Term Care for Iowa's Seniors

(NAPS)—Long-term care access and delivery has been a challenge in Iowa for years, with the pandemic hitting the state particularly hard, resulting in spiraling staffing shortages and facility closures—but there may be good news at last.

### The Problem

Currently, 42% of the state's nursing homes are experiencing staffing shortages—a rate that's nearly double the national average—while facility operating expenses have increased over the past three years, as state Medicaid reimbursement rates remain the same.

### An Answer

To help change post-acute and long-term care for the state's 1.1 million residents age 50+, state and local officials seek advice and support from health advocates and leaders such as Curana Health, a provider of high-quality primary care and value-based care programs that benefit residents and senior living organizations, to help drive change in the state.

“Curana Health works in partnership with facilities and state offices, to create a better future for the geriatric population in Iowa,” said Dr. Brian Whyms. “By creating quality-driven care solutions, we are able to provide access to rural facilities, offload the hospitals, and focus on solutions to the issues that plague our state's long-term care system.”

Tasha Janssen, NP-C, Director of Clinical Operations for Curana Health, emphasizes the importance of the work the company does in the state. “Much of our work in Iowa has been in partnering with the whole facility to improve care delivery and outcomes,” said Janssen. “We do this by working with both facilities and state regulators to ensure compliance, building upon the relationships that already exist and making them more open and transparent. In a state like Iowa, where long-term care facilities have faced challenges, this focus has created healthier, more honest communication among state officials, where positive outcomes are the goal of all parties—not complaints and injunctions.”

### The Result

For many facilities, partnering with Curana Health has been the difference between staying open and closing. With an embedded clinician care model that



**A provider of high-quality primary care and value-based care programs for senior living organizations works with state and local officials, healthcare stakeholders and facility operators in Iowa, to improve post-acute and long-term care for the state's aging population.**

achieves a 39% reduction in 30-day hospital readmission rate, the organization's work with Iowa facility partners has successfully helped reduce return to acute rates. “Lowering return to acute rates has been critical, as many of the state's facilities are smaller, with 20 to 40 beds,” said Janssen. “When you save beds, it decreases costs for the facility, which can be the difference between closing doors or keeping them open.”

Transforming the care experience for residents in senior care facilities is at the heart of the mission of this integrated, value-based medical group, which collaborates with skilled nursing facilities, assisted living, memory care, long-term care facilities, and life plan communities/continuing care retirement communities, to provide high-quality care. Its embedded clinician care model means providers become an extension of facility staff, providing a consistent model of care to all residents, improving census, and creating a more personalized care experience for residents, which results in high-quality outcomes.

Dr. Whyms, Janssen, and a team of over 30 medical providers, work with over 100 facilities in Iowa (over 25% of

the state's facilities), serving 7,500 residents. This includes the recently added Mercy Geriatrics, which has 10 facilities in the Des Moines metro area.

Both Dr. Whyms and Janssen share a passion for improving aging care in the state. Dr. Whyms is a board-certified internalist member of the American College of Physicians, while Iowa native Janssen serves on the Curana Health Medical Executive Committee, ACO Committee, and the Iowa Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine for the AQHA Iowa Chapter.

“We are serving a severely under-served population in Iowa. One that has a history of being impacted by rurality and exacerbated by the global pandemic,” said Dr. Whyms. “Many of the state's facilities have been closing because they can't afford to stay open, but we're on a mission to change that, with the entire Curana Health Iowa team dedicated to improving the continuum of care in the state's long-term care settings.”

### Learn More

For further facts and figures about health care in Iowa, visit [www.curanahealth.com](http://www.curanahealth.com).