



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH

September 1, 2022

RE: Joining forces – building the future of long-term care in Pennsylvania

Dear Pennsylvania Long-term Care Facility Administrator,

We greatly appreciate the hard work the COVID-19 pandemic has caused for you and your staff – a burden we too know well in public health, and I am writing to you to address our shared mission of building a more resilient and care-focused industry. To date there have been 46,600 deaths associated with COVID-19 among Pennsylvanians, and as we well know many of these deaths have occurred among residents and patients of long-term care facilities. The COVID-19 virus continues to evolve through variant strains that we expect will affect the health and safety of our seniors and medically fragile patients for the foreseeable future. Other common viral pathogens like influenza and norovirus that routinely cause disproportionate illness in congregate settings will no doubt return making infectious disease control and prevention daunting daily tasks for your operation. **We are very well aware of the enormous work burden outbreak control has caused over these past 30 months exacerbating challenges of a stretched and tired workforce.** Earlier this year, the United States Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy issued an advisory and call to action to address burnout of the healthcare workforce and potential staffing shortages. I invite you to watch a short video and read the advisory in the link below. [Health Worker Burnout – Current Priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/health/workers/burnout/)

The transformation of healthcare services and worker resiliency is a multi-factorial and complex challenge. The Pennsylvania Department of Health is working towards long-term care resiliency by launching and overseeing the Long-term Care Resiliency Infrastructure Supports & Empowerment (LTC-RISE) initiative – an opportunity for facilities to work with expert consultants at no financial cost, to address and improve workforce retention, emergency preparedness, and infection prevention and control capacity. LTC-RISE is laying the groundwork for change in our state where the progress made will advise future opportunities and resiliency building initiatives. **I am writing this letter to ask you to contact your LTC-RISE consultant so that your facility can benefit from these services, but equally important is gaining your partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Health in our overall mission to improve healthcare delivery in long-term care settings.** Your involvement allows us to fully reach our diverse communities, and better understand your challenges and needs that will help guide the development of new initiatives to ensure improvement and better sustainment of services.

Below is a list of the LTC-RISE consultants available to you based on region of Pennsylvania your facility is located in.

- Penn Medicine in partnership with Temple Health (Southeast Region)
- The Pennsylvania State University (Southcentral Region)
- LECOM Health (Northwest Region)
- AMI Expeditionary Healthcare (Northeast, Northcentral, and Southwest Regions)

Please go to the Department's LTC-RISE website to read more about this opportunity, see which region serves your facility based on county, and contact information to engage our consultant organizations.
<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/LTC-RISE.aspx>

I sincerely hope that you will join us at this critical juncture as we work towards optimal and practical resiliency building to best serve medically fragile Pennsylvanians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise Johnson", is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Denise Johnson, M.D.
Acting Secretary and Physician General
Pennsylvania Department of Health