

**CORI BUSH**  
1ST DISTRICT, MISSOURI

**WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE**  
2463 RAYBURN HOB  
WASHINGTON DC 20515  
(202) 225-2406

**ST. LOUIS OFFICE**  
1100 LOCUST ST.  
ST. LOUIS, MO 63101  
(314) 955-9980



**Congress of the United States**  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

RANKING MEMBER—SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENERGY POLICY,  
AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY,  
THE BORDER, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME AND FEDERAL  
GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION  
AND LIMITED GOVERNMENT

January 8, 2024

Dear Secretary Beccera,

I am writing in the aftermath of the sudden closure on December 15, 2023 of Northview Village, the City of St. Louis' largest nursing home. Due to the impact on vulnerable seniors, residents with disabilities, their families, and facility employees, I have concerns that the closure may have potentially violated the federal WARN Act<sup>1</sup> and federal Social Security Act laws<sup>2</sup> pertaining to the transfer and discharge of facility residents. For this reason, I am requesting that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ("Department") launch a formal investigation into the finances, provision of care, and use of Medicaid and Medicare funds at Northview Village, as part of investigating prevalent issues with long term care facilities across the St. Louis region. Further, I urge the Department to investigate allegations that the State of Missouri failed to adequately protect residents in these long-term facilities, including its most recent efforts to restrict funding of critical facility oversight infrastructure.

On December 15th, the facility's ownership cited payroll issues and abruptly closed the facility with no prior warning to residents' family members, employees, and the broader community. Residents of Northview Village were relocated with no ability to plan in advance, or even consent. As a result of the abrupt closure, 170 residents, including aging adults, people with disabilities, and others seeking rehabilitative care (including mental health services) were dangerously displaced and their families were scrambling to locate their loved ones. Moreover, there are issues regarding wage theft as Northview Village staff were terminated from their jobs without being compensated for their work or accrued benefits. In addition, union dues and healthcare premiums were deducted from employees checks. Since September 2023, Northview has not forwarded these funds to the appropriate organizations. This appalling treatment of residents, residents' families, and staff is deeply concerning and warrants further investigation by the Department.

Understandably, the sudden closure has upended the lives of residents and staff. I have concerns that there may have also been multiple potential violations of the federal laws governing the

---

<sup>1</sup> [29 U.S.C §2101 et seq](#)

<sup>2</sup> [42 U.S.C. § 1395i-3](#)

transfer and discharge of long-term facility residents. Without consulting or informing all residents' families, Northview Village moved some to new facilities, while other residents were later found roaming the surrounding neighborhoods unaccompanied. Some families were unable to locate their loved ones, sometimes for days, and had to resort to filing missing persons reports.<sup>3</sup> Many residents were removed with only the clothing on their backs, and arrived at new facilities without documentation of their medical histories and needs.<sup>4</sup> The facility was then looted, because the sudden closing was so disorganized and was announced on the local news, causing the permanent loss of many residents' personal belongings.

The current owner of Northview Village is Healthcare Accounting Services ("HAS"),<sup>5</sup> a company with several out-of-state owners that manage multiple long-term care facilities in the St. Louis metropolitan area. An investigation to substantiate claims that HAS failed to take preventive measures to ensure residents' safety and care, protect them, their medical records and belongings is vital for the community. Since HAS owns several facilities still in operation, there is significant concern that the crisis created by the sudden closure at Northview Village could happen again at its remaining facilities.

Federal Social Security law<sup>6</sup> clearly outlines the requirements for quality of care in skilled nursing facilities like Northview Village. It states that skilled nursing facilities may not transfer or discharge residents from their facilities without meeting certain requirements, and outlines the rights skilled nursing facility residents have pertaining to transfer and discharge. While the law provides that facilities may transfer or discharge residents from the facility if "the facility ceases to operate," it also requires the basis for the transfer or discharge be documented in the resident's clinical record by a physician. The various facilities in the St. Louis area where many of the Northview residents were transferred stated they received no medical documentation whatsoever with numerous patients. They indicated they were unable to properly treat the former Northview residents or provide the appropriate medication on schedule.

Federal Social Security law<sup>7</sup> also requires that nursing facilities contact the resident and, if known, their immediate family member or representative of the transfer and reasons thereof *before* they are transferred or discharged. It also requires them to record the reasons for the transfer and include the physician documentation referenced above, and to provide notice of the resident's right to appeal the transfer or discharge and provide contact information for various relevant state entities. An investigation is necessary to determine if these federal requirements were met by HAS in the closure of Northview Village.

This abrupt closure has also left the 184 Northview Village workers without pay, causing them financial uncertainty. Employees at Northview Village indicated they were completely caught off guard when their paychecks did not arrive on time and there was no advance warning. Federal

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/northview-nursing-home-closure-st-louis-78f24bc169ca7aaeed7aeb776e23dd80>

<sup>4</sup>

[https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-nursing-home-abruptly-closes-leaving-workers-unpaid-residents-relocated/article\\_e84d2206-9c29-11ee-8602-277ddfbfd7b.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/st-louis-nursing-home-abruptly-closes-leaving-workers-unpaid-residents-relocated/article_e84d2206-9c29-11ee-8602-277ddfbfd7b.html)

<sup>5</sup>

<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/details/nursing-home/265524/?city=Saint%20Louis&state=MO&zipcode=63113&measure=nursing-home-ownership>

<sup>6</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 1395i-3

<sup>7</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 1395i-3

law<sup>8</sup> provides that if an employer, including a business with 100 or more full-time workers, plans to reduce its force or close a worksite, it must provide sixty calendar days advance notice. This is to protect workers, their families, and communities. There is no record of HAS filing the legally required WARN notice, which also warrants an investigation into potential violations of federal employment law.

Throughout the First District and the state of Missouri, we have seen an increasing trend of out-of-state private equity investors focused on near-term profitability acquiring long-term care facilities. In conjunction, we have seen the living conditions and quality of care for residents, as well as worker pay sharply decline. These for-profit investors own the properties and contract with themselves to perform various services. This model in which they are both the property company and the operating company, provides additional opportunity to misappropriate funds, since there is no third party to audit finances. The sudden and devastating closure of Northview Village raises the troubling possibility that misappropriation of federal funds could have contributed to causing this entirely avoidable situation, and justifies an investigation by the Department into the HAS' financial operations.

Compounding this situation is the State of Missouri's continued underfunding and under-serving of these facilities and the vulnerable populations they serve. Missourians are in great need of these services, but its actions have left the long-term care infrastructure in the state particularly vulnerable. Until very recently, the State of Missouri had not adjusted Medicaid reimbursement levels to nursing homes over a nearly fifteen year time period, and even after that increase Medicaid only covers about eighty percent of the cost of care in nursing homes.<sup>9</sup>

The impact of a recent decision to underfund the state's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program played out front and center during the Northview Village crisis. That program, which provides essential oversight over the state's long-term care facilities, was granted a \$2.2 million increase by the state legislature to fully meet the state's needs. However, this summer Missouri Governor Michael Parson vetoed the increase, saying in his veto letter that "there is funding elsewhere in the budget to meet the needs of this program."<sup>10</sup> The Northview Village closure is an example of that promise being unfulfilled.

In the hours and days after the sudden closure of Northview Village, the state's Ombudsman Program scrambled to organize employees and advocates from across the state in an all-hands-on-deck effort to try to help track down patients and connect them with desperate loved ones. Their efforts were nothing short of heroic, but they should never have been put in such an unsupported position in the first place. Had this critical oversight infrastructure maintained its full funding, Northview Village residents may have been reunited with their families faster, and faced significantly less trauma. The decision to veto these funds demonstrates a need for your office to investigate all aspects of the State of Missouri's long-term care infrastructure.

---

<sup>8</sup> 29 U.S.C §2101 et seq  
<sup>9</sup>

[https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/business/before-abrupt-closure-st-louis-nursing-home-lost-major-medicare-cash-infusion/article\\_6064e79a-9eca-11ee-8a50-dfab2801459a.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/business/before-abrupt-closure-st-louis-nursing-home-lost-major-medicare-cash-infusion/article_6064e79a-9eca-11ee-8a50-dfab2801459a.html)

<sup>10</sup> [https://oa.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Fiscal\\_Year\\_2024\\_HB\\_10\\_Appropriation\\_Letter.pdf](https://oa.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Fiscal_Year_2024_HB_10_Appropriation_Letter.pdf), see page 5, Section 10.830.

No person should ever be put through the unacceptable crisis created by HAS's sudden closure of Northview Village, and there is significant concern that this situation could be replicated at other facilities in Missouri. I urge your office to conduct a full investigation into HAS and the State of Missouri to determine whether the handling and closure of Northview potentially violated federal law. With the trust of our broader communities and the lives and livelihoods of residents and staff at stake, it's critical that those involved be investigated and held accountable for any wrongdoing.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cori Bush". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CORI BUSH  
Member of Congress