

# Lack of staff, PPE hinder nursing homes' fight against COVID-19

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(HealthDay)—Staff shortages and a lack of personal protective

equipment (PPE) are among the reasons why U.S. nursing homes have been so severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

In a new report, the group said that about one-fifth of nursing homes—more than 3,000—did not have enough doctors, nursing aides, and other health care staff during December, *CBS News* reported. Many nursing home workers contracted COVID-19, forcing them to take time off. Remaining [staff](#) members had to fill the gaps and interact with more residents at once, leading to more outbreaks, the report said.

Although [worker](#) turnover in the nursing home industry has always been high, the [pandemic](#) has worsened the problem. Some clinical care staffers, overwhelmed by the stress and fear of catching COVID-19, have left the field altogether, *CBS News* reported. At the same time, other nursing home professionals, many of them women with young children, had to quit their jobs to help their children with remote schooling, and other workers found themselves taking time off to care for loved ones at [home](#) who had contracted the virus, according to the report.

In a separate report, the group said insufficient supplies of PPE have been another problem for nursing homes during the pandemic, with 8 percent not having enough surgical-grade N95 masks in December, *CBS News* reported. PPE supply levels improved during the fall but worsened again in December as demand spiked, in part because [health care workers](#) administering COVID-19 vaccines are required to wear masks and other protective gear.

**More information:** [CBS News Article](#)  
[More Information: U.S. PIRG](#)

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