

A BILL FOR AN ACT

To enact the “CNMI Dignified Aging and Long-Term Care Act of 2026”; to establish a comprehensive statutory and regulatory framework for assisted living facilities, skilled nursing facilities, and Programs of All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE); to regulate licensing, operations, and oversight of long-term care facilities; and for other purposes.; and for other purposes.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE TWENTY-FOURTH NORTHERN MARIANAS
COMMONWEALTH LEGISLATURE:**

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** This Act may be cited as the “CNMI Dignified Aging and
2 Long-Term Care Act of 2026.”

3 **Section 2. Legislative Findings and Purpose.** The Legislature finds that the
4 Commonwealth’s aging population continues to grow, and many families provide informal
5 caregiving without adequate institutional support. The absence of long-term care facilities
6 places strain on hospitals, family caregivers, and the overall healthcare system. Many
7 elderly and disabled individuals require nursing care, personal care services, supervision,
8 or related health services greater than that required for independent living but not requiring
9 hospitalization.

10 The Legislature further finds that the CNMI lacks a comprehensive statutory and
11 regulatory framework governing long-term care facilities, assisted living, skilled nursing,
12 and PACE programs. Establishing such a framework will improve quality of care, protect
13 residents, support families, and enable the Commonwealth to participate in federal
14 programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Veterans Affairs community care. The CNMI
15 has the opportunity to develop Saipan as a regional center for dignified aging and long-
16 term care services within Micronesia and the broader Pacific region. However, given the
17 current economic downturn in the CNMI, oversight of long-term care facilities should be
18 assigned to the Health Care Professions Licensing Board to help minimize the costs
19 associated with implementing this legislation. The Legislature may consider establishing a

1 separate regulatory board for long-term care facilities once the CNMI government's
2 financial position improves. Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a complete
3 system for the development, licensing, operation, and oversight of long-term care facilities
4 in the Commonwealth, ensuring safe, dignified, and high-quality care for elderly and
5 disabled residents.

6 **Section 3. Enactment.** Title 3, Division 2, Chapter 2 of the Commonwealth Code
7 is hereby amended by adding a new Article 3 to read as follows:

8 **“Article 3. CNMI Dignified Aging and Long-Term Care Act.**

9 **§ 101. Definitions.**

10 As used in this article, unless the context requires otherwise:

11 (a) “Administrator” means the individual responsible for the general administration
12 and management of a long-term care facility.

13 (b) “Assisted Living Facility” means a residential facility that provides housing,
14 supervision, personal care services, and assistance with activities of daily living for elderly
15 or infirm individuals who do not require continuous skilled nursing care.

16 (b) “Board” means the CNMI Health Care Professions Licensing Board.

17 (c) “Long-Term Care Facility” means any assisted living facility, skilled nursing
18 facility, PACE program site, or other residential facility providing ongoing care and
19 supervision to elderly or disabled individuals.

20 (d) “Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)” means an integrated
21 care delivery program providing comprehensive medical and social services to eligible
22 elderly individuals who require nursing facility level care but are able to remain in the
23 community.

24 (e) “Person” means any individual, corporation, partnership, association,
25 governmental entity, or other legal organization.

26 (f) “Skilled Nursing Facility” means an institution, residence, or facility providing

1 accommodations, nursing care, rehabilitation services, and related medical services
2 for two or more individuals not related to the operator who require such services for twenty-
3 four hours or more.

4 **§ 102. Health Care Professions Licensing Board.**

5 The CNMI Health Care Professions Licensing Board shall regulate, license,
6 inspect, and oversee long-term care facilities until such time that a separate long-term care
7 licensing board is established by law.

8 **§ 103. License Required.**

9 (a) No person shall operate a long-term care facility without a valid license issued
10 by the Health Care Professions Licensing Board.

11 (b) A hospital license does not authorize long-term care operations.

12 (c) Facilities seeking Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement must obtain CMS
13 certification in addition to CNMI licensure.

14 (d) Government operated facilities are subject to the same requirements as private
15 facilities.

16 **§ 104. Applicability to Commonwealth Facilities.**

17 Any long-term care facility operated by the Commonwealth government or any
18 agency thereof shall be subject to the same licensing requirements, inspections, and
19 regulatory standards applicable to privately operated facilities under this Article. All
20 Commonwealth-operated facilities shall obtain and maintain a valid license issued by the
21 Health Care Professions Licensing Board.

22 **§ 105. Application for License.**

23 (a) Any person proposing to operate a long-term care facility shall, prior to the
24 commencement of operations, submit an application to the Health Care Professions
25 Licensing Board containing the following information:

- 26 (1) the name and address of the applicant;
27 (2) the name and qualifications of the proposed administrator;
28 (3) the address and description of the premises to be used as the facility;

- 1 (4) the proposed bed capacity or resident occupancy;
- 2 (5) a description of the services to be provided;
- 3 (6) staffing plans and professional qualifications;
- 4 (7) proof that the premises comply with applicable building, zoning, and
- 5 safety laws; and
- 6 (8) any additional information required by the Board.

7 (b) Within sixty days of receipt of a completed application, the Board shall issue a
8 license unless it determines that the applicant does not meet the requirements of this
9 Article. Licenses shall be valid for one year.

10 **§ 106. Renewal and Revocation of License.**

- 11 (a) Renewal applications shall be submitted sixty (60) days before expiration.
- 12 (b) The Health Care Professions Licensing Board may suspend or revoke a license
- 13 for violations of this Act or regulations.
- 14 (c) A provisional license may be issued for up to ninety (90) days to correct
- 15 deficiencies.

16 **§ 107. Operational Standards.** All facilities shall:

- 17 (a) Operate under a qualified administrator;
- 18 (b) Maintain appropriate nursing staff, including at least one registered nurse for
- 19 skilled nursing facilities;
- 20 (c) Provide or arrange physician, rehabilitation, mental health, and social services;
- 21 (d) Store medications securely and ensure proper administration;
- 22 (e) Maintain safe and sanitary premises;
- 23 (f) Provide nutritious meals and therapeutic diets;
- 24 (g) Maintain complete resident records; and
- 25 (h) Maintain fiscal and administrative records demonstrating compliance.

26 **§ 108. Name of Facility.**

27 No long-term care facility shall use the words hospital, sanitarium, rehabilitation
28 center, or any words conveying a substantially similar meaning unless authorized by law.

1 **§ 109. Administration and Management of Long-Term Care Facilities.**

2 Every long-term care facility licensed pursuant to this Article shall comply with all
3 standards, rules, and regulations established by the Health Care Professions Licensing
4 Board and shall meet the following requirements:

5 (a) Each facility shall operate under the administrative direction of a qualified
6 administrator whose name appears on the facility license.

7 (b) Facilities providing skilled nursing services shall maintain at least one registered
8 nurse responsible for planning and directing nursing care and shall maintain licensed
9 nursing personnel appropriate to the size of the facility and the needs of residents.

10 (c) Facilities shall provide or arrange access to physician services, rehabilitative
11 services, social services, mental health services, and recreational services appropriate to
12 the needs of residents.

13 (d) All drugs and medications shall be stored in secure locations accessible only to
14 authorized personnel. Medication administration shall be performed only by individuals
15 legally authorized to administer medications under Commonwealth law.

16 (e) Facilities shall maintain their premises and equipment in a safe and sanitary
17 condition consistent with public health standards.

18 (f) Facilities shall provide residents with nutritious meals meeting generally
19 accepted standards of proper nutrition and shall provide therapeutic diets when prescribed
20 by a physician or qualified health professional.

21 (g) Facilities shall maintain complete and accurate records for each resident
22 including admission and discharge information, medical and health records, personal and
23 social history, and contact information for next of kin or legal representatives.

24 (h) Facilities shall maintain fiscal and administrative records sufficient to
25 demonstrate compliance with operational requirements.

26 **§ 110. Resident Contracts.**

27 Each resident admitted to a facility shall be covered by a written contract executed
28 between the resident or the resident's legal representative and the facility specifying the

1 services provided, rates and charges, rights and obligations of both parties, and terms of
2 residency.

3 **§ 111. Classification of Facilities.**

4 The Health Care Professions Licensing Board may classify long-term care facilities
5 based on size, services provided, and level of care required and may establish different
6 regulatory requirements for different classifications.

7 **§ 112. Property and Personal Affairs of Residents.**

8 Admission to a facility shall not confer authority upon the facility or its staff to
9 manage the personal property or financial affairs of residents except as necessary for
10 safekeeping.

11 **§ 113. Health of Personnel.**

12 Facilities shall not employ personnel with communicable diseases or other
13 conditions that may endanger the health or safety of residents.

14 **§ 114. Resident Transfer and Discharge.**

15 Residents requiring services beyond the capability of the facility shall be transferred
16 to an appropriate health care setting. Except in emergencies, reasonable notice shall be
17 provided prior to transfer or discharge.

18 **§ 115. Rebating Prohibited.**

19 No owner, administrator, employee, or representative of a long-term care facility
20 shall pay or receive commissions, bonuses, fees, or other gratuities in exchange for resident
21 referrals.

22 **§ 116. Closure of Facility.**

23 Facilities discontinuing operation shall notify the Health Care Professions
24 Licensing, notify residents and their legal representatives, and ensure safe transfer of
25 residents to appropriate care settings.

26 **§ 117. Exemptions.**

1 Facilities operated by religious organizations may be exempt from certain medical
2 service requirements consistent with their religious beliefs, provided that residents are
3 informed of such limitations.

4 **§ 118. Inspection Authority.**

5 The Health Care Professions Licensing Board and its authorized representatives
6 may enter and inspect facilities at reasonable times to determine compliance with this
7 Article.

8 **§ 119. Public Funds.**

9 No public funds shall be paid to a long-term care facility unless the facility
10 maintains a valid license issued by the Commonwealth and complies with applicable
11 federal certification requirements.

12 **§ 120. Fees.**

13 License applications and renewals shall be accompanied by fees established by
14 regulation of the Health Care Professions Licensing Board.

15 **§ 121. Penalties.**

16 Any person operating a long-term care facility without a valid license shall be
17 subject to fines or other penalties established by law. Each day of violation shall constitute
18 a separate offense.

19 **§ 122. Hearings and Judicial Review.**

20 Any action taken by the Health Care Professions Licensing Board under this Article
21 shall be subject to administrative hearings and judicial review in accordance with
22 Commonwealth law.

23 **§ 123. Survey and Certification Authority.**

24 The Health Care Professions Licensing Board shall serve as the Commonwealth's
25 survey and certification authority for long-term care facilities and shall coordinate with the
26 Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services regarding federal certification requirements.

27 **§ 124. Construction and Safety Standards.**

1 Facilities shall comply with Commonwealth building codes and applicable federal
2 safety standards including life-safety and fire protection requirements.

3 **§ 125. Workforce Requirements.**

4 Facilities shall maintain sufficient staffing to ensure the health and safety of
5 residents including licensed nursing personnel appropriate to the level of care provided.

6 **§ 126. Coordination with Medicaid Programs.**

7 The Health Care Professions Licensing Board shall coordinate with the CNMI
8 Medicaid Agency and relevant federal authorities to support long-term care services
9 eligible for federal reimbursement.

10 **§ 127. Regional Long-Term Care Development.**

11 The Commonwealth recognizes the opportunity for Saipan to serve as a destination
12 for high quality long-term care services within Micronesia and the broader Pacific region.
13 By establishing a strong regulatory framework and encouraging responsible investment in
14 long-term care infrastructure, the Commonwealth may position Saipan as a center for
15 dignified aging and specialized elder care services for residents of the Commonwealth and
16 families throughout the region seeking compassionate long-term care solutions.

17 **§ 128. Rules and Regulations.**

18 The Health Care Professions Licensing Board shall implement rules and regulations
19 necessary to implement the provisions of this Article.”

20 **Section 4. Severability.** If any provision of this Act or the application of any such
21 provision to any person or circumstance should be held invalid by a court of competent
22 jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act or the application of its provisions to persons or
23 circumstances other than those to which it is held invalid shall not be affected thereby.


24 **Section 5. Savings Clause.** This Act and any repealer contained herein shall not
25 be construed as affecting any existing right acquired under contract or acquired under
26 statutes repealed or under any rule, regulation or order adopted under the statutes.
27 Repealers contained in this Act shall not affect any proceeding instituted under or pursuant
28 to prior law. The enactment of this Act shall not have the effect of terminating, or in any

1 way modifying, any liability civil or criminal, which shall already be in existence at the
2 date this Act becomes effective.

3 **Section 6. Effective Date.** This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
4 Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

Date: May 1, 2026

Introduced By:



Senator Paul A. Manglona

Reviewed for Legal Sufficiency by:



Senate Legal Counsel

