



Workforce Policy Weekly

August 5, 2022

COVID Calls Next Week: Workforce, workforce, workforce! On **Monday, August 8 at 3:30 PM ET**, Joshua Smith, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at LeadingAge California will join us to talk about DEI, workforce and LeadingAge California's efforts in these areas including the Gateway-In Project. On **Wednesday August 10**, Ron Hetrick from EMSI will talk about workforce changes and how demographics are shaping these new trends. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#). You can also find previous call recordings [here](#). Note that to access recordings of the calls you need a LeadingAge password. Any staff member of any LeadingAge member organization can set up a password to access previous calls and other "members only" content.

Aging Services Workforce Now Campaign. The workforce crisis in our sector requires immediate action. LeadingAge's ongoing federal government advocacy is culminating in this new coordinated advocacy campaign—[join us to take action for the aging services workforce—now!](#)

Schedule Your Congressional Visit to Talk Workforce Action. Don't miss the opportunity to join 30+ fellow state partners and members taking action and [Schedule a Coffee Chat With Your Members of Congress](#). LeadingAge and members are taking our workforce solutions to Capitol Hill this month with Congressional visits as part of the Aging Services Workforce Action Now campaign. [Learn more about ways to take action.](#)

A Successful National Workforce Day of Action

LeadingAge members from around the country participated in a National Workforce Day of Action on July 27, demanding Congress and the Administration take responsibility and immediate action to address the workforce crisis in aging services—NOW. Hundreds of messages were sent to Senators, Representatives, and CMS on a range of issues affecting our workforce. It's not too late to [add your voice](#)—you can still take action on our Workforce Action Alerts:

- [Tell CMS to Support Aging Service Providers](#)
- [Ask Your Senators to Cosponsor CNA Lockout Legislation](#)
- [Keep Temporary Assistant \(TNA\) Flexibilities](#)

Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Bill Address Older Adults Workforce Investments. On July 28, 2022, the Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) released the Chairman's mark of the 12 Senate fiscal year (FY) 2023 appropriations bills. The Senate [FY 2023 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill](#) includes critical investments in programs to recruit direct care workers, expand geriatric workforce academic training, and increase health professions workforce investments. We were thrilled the Senate FY 2023 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill includes critical investments key to LeadingAge's "Aging Services Workforce Now" campaign but also highlight where more advocacy is needed.

Advancing the Direct Support Workforce as a Career. The Committee recommends \$10 million for competitive grants, to be awarded to the Department of Labor (DOL), in coordination with the Administration for Community Living (ACL), for the delivery of innovative strategies to significantly expand, stabilize, and retain direct support workers who provide home and community-based services (HCBS) to people with disabilities and older adults. The Committee's accompanying [report language](#)

recognizes the importance of direct care workers and includes report language that reiterates that “support for the need for a stable, well-qualified direct care workforce is essential.” Additionally, the Committee provides:

- \$47.2 million for the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, an increase of \$2 million.
- \$5.7 million for the Health Resource and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide health professions workforce information and analysis.
- \$3.2 billion, an increase of \$38 million for Nursing Workforce Development programs.
- \$30 million for activities to provide comprehensive and evidence-based support to prevent suicide, burnout, and mental and behavioral health conditions among healthcare providers.
- \$65 million to expand Registered Apprenticeships, supporting prioritization of funding to expand to new industries, and for underserved or underrepresented populations.

You can access an article [here](#) that provides additional background on the provisions that are of interest to LeadingAge members. The LeadingAge Statement on the Fiscal Year 2023 Senate Labor-Health and Human Services Appropriations Funding Bill, is available [here](#).

Statement of Support for the Inflation Reduction Act. As a member of the Leadership Council on Aging Organizations (LCAO), LeadingAge joined the coalition of 68 national organizations in expressing its support for the Senate budget reconciliation proposals contained in the Inflation Reduction Act to reduce Medicare prescription drug costs and continue expiring Affordable Care Act (ACA) premium subsidies. LCAO also urged the Senate to include an investment in Medicaid home and community-based services, which has not been included in the current proposal. The full statement can be found [here](#).

Study on the association of State COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates and staffing in nursing homes: A [study](#) in JAMA Health Forum looked at the association between state COVID-19 vaccine mandates for US nursing homes employees and staff vaccination coverage and staff shortages. The study which looked at nursing homes in 38 states a vaccine mandate experienced an increase in staff vaccination coverage compared with facilities in states with no mandate and no worsening of reported staffing shortages following the mandates.

What are the Implications of Long COVID for Employment and Health Coverage? It is too early to have comprehensive data or a clear picture of employment outcomes, but there are reports that claims associated with long COVID are rising for disability insurance, workers compensation, and group health insurance. This KFF [policy watch](#) reviews what we know and outlines key questions regarding employment and coverage outcomes.

NAMD Webinar Reviews Promising Trends and Initiatives Coming from ARPA FMAP Funding. National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD) leaders examine some of the most promising trends and proposals for investing funds from Section 9817 of the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 (P.L. 117-2). Section 9817 of the ARPA provides qualifying states with a temporary 10 percentage point increase to the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for certain Medicaid expenditures for HCBS beginning, April 1, 2021, and ending March 31, 2022. This increased funding, provided an estimated \$12.7 billion, according to Congressional Budget Office.

The panel also answered questions around Section 9817 funding and all the many ways it can be used to expand services, promote long-term workforce development, and create the infrastructure for a

brighter future. Additionally, this panel of state and federal leaders discuss pandemic recovery, workforce strategies, and maintenance of effort (MOE) considerations to ensure the long-term sustainability of home and community-based services (HCBS).

Presenters include:

- Jack Rollins, Director of Federal Policy, NAMD, discusses how states must address structural factors tied to HCBS needs, timelines, and long-term success.
- Melissa Weatherton, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services, State of Arkansas reviews the steps her state has used to successfully navigate the ARPA 9817 funding process.
- Jayson Wright, Managing Consultant at Guidehouse provides a national perspective on current trends in ARPA proposal categories, CMS approvals, and early implementations.
- Lance Robertson, former U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging and a Director at Guidehouse — shares a vision for how states can use Section 9817 funds to secure the future of HCBS.

The webinar slides are available [here](#).