

## Workforce Policy Weekly

July 29, 2022

**COVID Calls Next Week.** What's the White House doing at this stage of the pandemic? What's coming in the Fall? Join us on **Monday, August 1 at 3:30 PM ET**, when Dr. Cyrus Shahpar of the White House COVID-19 Task Force tells us what to expect this week and through the coming weeks and months. On **Wednesday, August 3 at 3:30 PM ET**. Dr. Ashley Ritter from [Dear Pandemic](#), "a website where bona fide nerdy girls post real info on COVID-19" will be with us to talk all things COVID. (Needless to say, the "nerdy girls" part is not serious; the information is for all.) Posts from experts, some well-known, cover new questions and bring facts to the discussion. 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! [Check out this week's Aging Services Workforce Now Campaign Update](#).

**Senate Appropriations Committee Release FY 2023 Healthcare Spending Bills.** On July 28, the Senate Appropriations Committee released their fiscal year (FY) 2023 Appropriations bills. These were not done in coordination with the House so there is a lot more work to be done to fund the government for FY 2023 and we anticipate that there will be a continuing resolution at the end of September in order to facilitate continued work on FY2023 appropriations. You can view the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (Labor-HHS) [bill summary here](#), and [explanatory statement here](#).

Some highlights regarding the healthcare workforce programs of importance to LeadingAge include:

- The Committee provides \$47,245,000 for the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, an increase of \$2,000,000. This program supports training to integrate geriatrics into primary care delivery and develops academic primary care community-based partnerships to address gaps in healthcare for older adults.
- The Committee provides \$2.959 billion for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Grants, an increase of \$80 million over fiscal year 2022; \$303 million for Registered Apprenticeships, an increase of \$65 million; and \$1.774 billion for Job Corps, an increase of \$25 million.
- The Committee provides \$10,000,000 to support careers for the Direct Support Workforce for competitive grants, to be awarded in coordination with the Administration for Community Living, for the delivery of innovative strategies to significantly expand, stabilize, and retain direct support workers who provide home and community-based services to people with disabilities and older adults. Grants would be awarded to partnerships of non-governmental entities and State or local governments to develop and implement strategies to recruit, educate, train, retain, and promote career advancement of direct support workers. Strategies for improving the direct support workforce must include a goal to significantly reduce turnover and improve retention of such workers, and to reduce barriers to entry for a diverse and high-quality direct support workforce, including strategies for improving wages and benefits,

professional development and other worker supportive services, and advancement opportunities.

**Hearing to Address Workplace Protections for Domestic Workers.** This week, the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held a hearing, “Essential but Undervalued: Examining Workplace Protections for Domestic Workers.” The hearing explored the important role domestic workers play in our nation’s households and economy, and how these professionals deserve fair pay and policies that provide access to paid sick and family medical leave. Workforce Protections Subcommittee Chair Alma Adams (D-NC) and several witnesses shared testimony on how Representative Jayapal’s Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Act (H.R. 4826) would take critical steps to support these invaluable workers. The bill requires employers to provide domestic workers with a written agreement covering wages, sick leave, benefits, and other matters. Republican Subcommittee members, and a hearing witness, shared their opposition to the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Act and are mostly concerned that it does not adequately address wage and hour policies to support domestic workers and their employers. An article on the hearing is available [here](#). You can also view the hearing on the [Workforce Protections Subcommittee website](#).

**House Bill Introduced to Study Impact of Staffing Agency Price Gouging During COVID-19 Pandemic.** Members of the GOP Doctors Caucus, Reps. Greg Murphy, M.D. (R-NC) and Mariannette Miller-Meeke, M.D. (R-IA), introduced the Travel Nursing Agency Transparency Study Act ([H.R. 8576](#)), on July 28, 2022. The bill is a House companion to a [S. 4352](#), introduced by Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND). If enacted, the Travel Nursing Agency Transparency Study Act, would require the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study and report to Congress, within one year, on the business practices and the impact of hiring “travel” nurse agencies across the healthcare field during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LeadingAge supports the Travel Nursing Agency Transparency Study Act. Earlier this year, LeadingAge and several long-term care and health care organizations sent a joint letter to the White House COVID-19 Response Team coordinator requesting the federal government to look into exorbitant nurse staffing agency rates that came into practice during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, to address this problem, LeadingAge wrote a [letter](#) to the Chairwoman of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in October 2021, to urge them to investigate nurse staffing agencies’ conduct as a violation of our antitrust or consumer protection laws.

Additionally, LeadingAge has been tracking state-level legislation that addresses nurse staffing agencies price gouging. Connecticut, Iowa, Louisiana, Oregon and Tennessee have formally passed legislation regulating the staffing agencies. You can access the tracker here: <https://leadingage.org/legislation/states-addressing-price-gouging-staffing-agencies>.

You can access an article regarding the Travel Nursing Agency Transparency Study Act [here](#).

**TNA-to-CNA Process.** LeadingAge continues to push CMS for more information on how to handle transitioning of TNAs to CNAs in states with significant backlog. CMS states that they are thoroughly reviewing the issue and intend to release detailed information “soon” but stress in the meantime that TNAs / nursing homes should continue attempts to enroll in NATCEPs and sit for exams and maintain documentation of such attempts and the outcomes.