



Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

March 4, 2022

LeadingAge Coronavirus Call. New research evidence of a higher risk of heart attacks, strokes, and mental health issues after COVID. On **Monday, March 7 at 3:30 PM ET**, **Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly**, Director of the Clinical Epidemiology Center at Veterans Affairs St. Louis Health Care will talk about research from his center on the increased risk of cardiovascular and mental health issues up to a year after having COVID. He will talk about the importance of cardiovascular care post COVID infection in people of all ages, whether their COVID symptoms were mild or very severe. The cardiovascular research was published in Nature Medicine on February 7. He'll answer questions from callers and provide suggestions for aging services providers. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#).

CMS National Nursing Homes Stakeholder Call: CMS will host a national nursing homes stakeholder call on Thursday, March 10 at 3pm ET to review the Biden Administration's initiative to improve quality in nursing homes. Register for this call [here](#). Read the White House Fact Sheet [here](#).

New resources available from CDC on COVID-19 and infection control. [CDC's Project Firstline](#) offers resources to help frontline healthcare workers understand and confidently apply the infection control principles necessary to protect themselves, their families and their community. On March 14 from 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET CDC is hosting an event to introduce new infection control resources. Dozens of new educational resources and training materials will go live on the following day, March 15. To register for the event on March 14, click [here](#).

Webinar: Earned Income Tax Credit Information Now Available. New resources and information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is now available on the [HUD Exchange](#). The 2021 American Rescue Plan (ARP) expanded the EITC to include more workers without children as well as older workers (65+), temporarily raised the maximum credit for individuals without dependents from approximately \$540 to \$1,500 and increased the income cap to qualify for individuals without dependents from approximately \$16,000 to \$21,000. The EITC is not considered income and receiving these tax credits will not impact anyone's eligibility for federal benefits. The federal government along with hundreds of non-profit organizations, state and local governments, and members of Congress are engaged in an all-out push to make sure every eligible American receives the EITC by filing their taxes. With just over one month left until the tax filing deadline of April 18, join HUD, Treasury, and the White House on Wednesday, March 9, 2022, from 2:00 PM – 2:45 PM for a [webinar](#) on the CTC and EITC.

CMS Releases Medicaid "Unwinding" Resources. CMS issued new guidance to states about promoting continuing of coverage and distributing the eligibility and enrollment workload in the upcoming unwinding of Medicaid PHE related authorities. They highlight resources at www.medicaid.gov/unwinding including a [communications toolkit](#). The email sent out by the Administration with details can be found [here](#) and the State Health Officials Memo can be found [here](#).

Biden Administration Releases New COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The White House released a new [National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan](#). It is focused on 4 key goals: 1) Protect and treat against covid; 2) prepare for new variants; 3) prevent economic and educational shutdowns; and 4) continue to vaccinate the world. Each of the four goals has a number of specific tactics, both for the Administration to execute on its own and for them to work with Congress to achieve.

MACPAC Brief on State Strategies to Help with Nursing Facility Staff Shortages. the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (MACPAC) released a new [brief](#) on state policy levers to address nursing facility staffing shortages.

HMA Webinar on new ACO Reach Model. Health Management Associates is hosting a webinar on the new ACO REACH Model. One of the speakers is their new Managing Director for Medicare, Amy Bassano, formerly the Deputy Director at CMMI. Register and learn more [here](#).

Interview with Dr. Michael Fine, author and former Director of Rhode Island Department of Health. [Here](#) is an article featuring some of the highlights from our interview with Dr. Michael Fine, Chief Health Strategist for the city of Central Falls, Rhode Island. Central Falls has the distinction of having both the most COVID and the least COVID at different points during the pandemic. He talked about his views on the new CDC recommendations and the tension between politics and public health, COVID and the aging services workforce, and myths related to Omicron. He further suggested that we have not figured out how to best use rapid testing and should be using it more.

West Health Institute Requesting Feedback on Telehealth. [West Health Institute](#), a nonprofit, nonpartisan applied medical research organization, is seeking to understand providers' barriers, goals, and experiences serving older adults via telehealth. They are working closely with subject matter experts from around the country to develop provider-focused principles, guidelines, and implementation strategies to support the use of telehealth with older adults. The results of this [10-minute survey](#) will be used in those efforts.

Pennsylvania Medicaid Gap Study. LeadingAge Pennsylvania released a [report](#) this week showing the gap between Medicaid nursing home rates in the state and the actual cost of care. The gap is \$86.26 per resident day. The report was prepared by RKL and is explained in more detail in this [press release](#).

Provider Relief Webinar Recording Now Available: HRSA has finally posted the [recording](#) of its Feb 17 webinar on Nursing Home Infection Control Provider Relief Reporting and the corresponding [slides](#). The content is nearly identical to the Feb 2 webinar that HRSA presented for LeadingAge members. Just a friendly reminder that second period reporting, including the reporting on Nursing Home Infection Control funds, must be completed by 11:59 p.m. ET on March 31.

CMS stakeholder call on Medicaid RFI. CMS held a stakeholder call on the Medicaid and CHIP RFI on March 1. A lot of the questions were about logistics of submitting responses because CMS is using an online form rather than a traditional upload of a pdf to regulations.gov for these comments. Each question in the RFI has room for 20,000 words so there should be plenty of space for comments. If you need to use citations, one suggestion that came up was putting them in a google doc and embedding it in the form; there is [no way to attach documents for this submission](#). Commentors do not have to answer all the questions, just the ones most pertinent to them. CMS asked for comments to be as specific and actionable as possible because they plan to utilize a range of tools to implement the suggestions, some of which may be faster than others. LeadingAge will be commenting and members

can please send their ideas to Mollie (MGurian@LeadingAge.org). The RFI can found at: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-announces-request-information-access-care-and-coverage-people-enrolled>

Nursing Home Advisory Group: Kara Jacobs-Slifka joined the Nursing Home Advisory Group on February 22 to discuss recommendations for healthcare settings and nursing homes. This discussion included the rationale behind recommendations and was followed by policy updates from LeadingAge staff and member discussion. Read more [here](#). Please email Jodi Eyigor jeyigor@leadingage.org to be added to the Nursing Home Advisory Group list. The next call will take place Tuesday, April 26.

State of the Union Address included a nursing home quality focus. We learned in a meeting with CMS – and then it broke in the media – that President Biden would include a nursing home initiative in the State of the Union Address. We are pleased to see a focus on nursing homes (and aging services) in this important speech; however, the details matter. [Here](#) is Katie Smith Sloan’s statement on the President’s “**FACT SHEET**” on “Protecting Seniors and People with Disabilities by Improving Safety and Quality of Care in the Nation’s Nursing Homes. Here is today’s full [White House Statement](#) about the content of the State of the Union Address. (It’s about halfway into the statement, under the title, “Protect Seniors and other nursing home residents by cracking down on unsafe nursing homes.”) Additional elements of the speech will be important to aging services providers as well, such as a call for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, eliminating barriers to good paying jobs for all Americans, provisions about skills based apprenticeships, and paycheck fairness, among others.)

CMS has invited LeadingAge to work closely, along with other stakeholder organizations, in the implementation of the work. We have been assured that the first step, sometime this spring, will be a call for information from the field. We encourage members to work with us to develop the LeadingAge response and to submit their own input to CMS. The three primary components of the initiative, according to early information in our briefing and released to the media are:

- **Staffing** – it sounds like CMS will conduct a year- long study on staffing ratios in nursing homes, which, CMS officials acknowledge, are not just a number; there are other important considerations. They expect to issue a proposed regulation (with a comment period) after that.
- **Special Focus Facilities** and increased funding for state survey agencies to identify “substandard” performing nursing homes.
- **Ownership Transparency**

The Latest from the LTSS Center @UMass Boston. [Read the latest report](#) from the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston, which outlines how community stakeholders can help older adults better prepare for and recover from climate change-related emergencies. [The Impact of Climate Change: Why Older Adults are Vulnerable](#) highlights the disproportionately negative, short- and long-term impacts of climate change on older adults and recommends actions that various stakeholders can take to address those impacts.

Your Stories Matter: Tell us Your Resident and Client Engagement Innovations. The [LeadingAge Story Collector](#) makes it easy to tell your stories of innovation and impact. We want to learn about your innovations in resident and client engagement, and how they will drive change for the future. How do you build a rich and inclusive culture with the people you serve? How has your messaging changed?

What lessons about transparency and communication are you putting to work? Visit the [Story Collector](#), powered by LeadingAge Gold Partner Greystone, to share.

New Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Member Community Group. We are excited to announce a new My LeadingAge Member Community group. Guided by LeadingAge’s diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitment, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group offers members, regardless of provider setting, professional role, or personal identities, a virtual space to engage with peers and share resources about ways to move the work of diversity, equity and inclusion forward within organizations. This group is open to all who wish to cultivate both individual and organizational learnings, skills, and practices in a shared community setting. [Log in to your MyLeadingAge account](#) to check out the new DEI Member Community Group.

New Workshop: Building Positive Perceptions with Partnerships and Events. Learn how to build partnerships and create community events that showcase how your organization helps older adults thrive. This live, virtual workshop will focus on applying the research-backed communications strategies of LeadingAge’s new [Opening Doors to Aging Services](#) initiative that introduces the public to aging services. The March webinar is the third in the four-part series. Registrants for this event will receive a recording of the presentation and a 10% discount on the final event in this series. Thursday, March 24, 2-3:30 pm ET. [Register today!](#)

Will We See You in DC for Leadership Summit? The 2022 LeadingAge Leadership Summit provides a unique opportunity for leaders in aging services to take time to think strategically as we examine the current trends, emerging issues, and long-term changes that we will need to adapt to in order to keep our organizations successful. [Learn more and register today.](#)