



Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

July 8, 2022

Coronavirus Update Calls for Week of July 11. On **Monday, July 11, at 3:30pm ET**, we will welcome back aging services economist Howard Gleckman from the Urban Institute, who will talk about the issues laid bare by COVID-19 and provide insights on how we can create the aging services infrastructure of the future. On **Wednesday, July 13, at 3:30pm ET**, we will welcome Dr. Vito Ilacqua from the Indoor Environments Division of the Environmental Protection Agency to discuss how proper ventilation and HVAC systems can help mitigate COVID-19 transmission and create healthier and safer environments. 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.

CMS Will Begin Posting Staffing and Staff Turnover Measures. In January 2022, CMS began posting new weekend staffing and staff turnover measures on Care Compare ([CMS memorandum QSO 22-08-NH](#)). These measures will be included in Nursing Home Five Star Quality Rating System methodology starting with the July 27th, 2022 Care Compare refresh. In addition to existing measures of registered nurse (RN) and total nurse hours per resident per day, the new staffing rating methodology will include the following measures: total nurse staffing hours per resident per day weekends; total nurse staff turnover within a given year; registered nurse (RN) turnover with a given year; and, number of administrators who have left the nursing home within a given year. Each nursing home's performance on the staffing measures are converted to points, then summed and compared to thresholds to determine the staffing star rating. Additionally, to emphasize the importance of staffing, we will no longer add one star to the overall rating of nursing homes that have a four-star staffing rating. Rather, only nursing homes with a five-star staffing rating will be rewarded with an increase in their overall star rating. Additional details regarding the staffing rating methodology are included in the [Nursing Home Five-Star Quality Rating Technical Users' Guide](#).

Briefing: Evaluation of CMS Initiative to Reduce Avoidable Hospitalizations of Nursing Home Residents. The July Long-Term Care Discussion Group (LTCDG) meeting, set for July 20, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET will feature a briefing by the researchers at RTI on their evaluation of a CMI initiative to reduce avoidable hospitalizations of nursing home residents. The questions that were evaluated were whether hospitalizations could be reduced by improving onsite clinical support in nursing homes and whether adding a Medicare payment component would incentivize nursing homes and clinicians to provide on site acute care for eligible long-stay residents. How to connect to the LTCDG meeting on July 20:

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://ahip-org.zoom.us/j/81721562668?pwd=fbeHg7vtzw8EeayoKxMxmYYR2Gqamr.1>

Meeting ID: 817 2156 2668

Passcode: 537395

One tap mobile
+16465588656,,81721562668# US (New York)
+13017158592,,81721562668# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)
+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 817 2156 2668

Find your local number: <https://ahip-org.zoom.us/j/kd6zBfyad1>

CMS unveiled a suite of new resources to improve CMS and state oversight of Medicaid managed care programs, including updates to a new web-based portal for state reporting on managed care programs to CMS, additional reporting templates and a new technical assistance toolkit, to help states improve their overall monitoring and oversight of managed care. As an additional step to aid states and the individuals many Medicaid programs serve, CMS also released a toolkit to support program monitoring for Medicaid enrollees in Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS). The toolkit, "Promoting Access in Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care: Managed Long-Term Services and Supports Access Monitoring Toolkit," was developed in response to MLTSS growth and federal oversight concerns about access to services and quality-of-care. View the Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Monitoring and Oversight Tools [here](#).

Congressional Update. Senate Democrats released [legislative text](#) detailing their [updated drug pricing plan](#) in order to revive the reconciliation bill that fell apart last year. The proposal is being sent to the parliamentarian to ensure it follows the Senate's rules on reconciliation, and largely mirrors the agreement forged on drug pricing in November. However, some changes have been made to the proposal. Medicare drug negotiations begin in 2023, rather than 2024, and negotiated prices take effect in 2026 instead of 2025. The new bill also allows for a delay in negotiations for biosimilar drugs "for up to two years, if a biosimilar demonstrates a high likelihood of entering the market before the negotiated price would take effect."

Further, while the new text maintains the provisions that cap seniors' drug costs under Medicare at \$2,000 each year, it broadens the Part D low-income subsidy eligibility from 135% to 150% of the federal poverty level, and it modifies the premium stabilization portion of the bill. The bill also no longer includes a \$35 monthly cap on insulin costs for Medicare patients. Instead, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has signaled that he wants to bring a more comprehensive, bipartisan insulin bill from Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) to the floor for a vote.

Senator Schumer's decision to continue negotiating with Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) to craft a reconciliation package has thrown a possible wrench into bipartisan, bicameral negotiations on the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA), legislation to boost domestic semiconductor manufacturing

and U.S. competitiveness. In fact, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell vowed to stop USICA in its tracks if Schumer pushes a partisan reconciliation package. So, what does the path forward look like from here? Will USICA take a back seat to the reconciliation package? Will both bills make it to the finish line independently? Or, will a scaled back version of USICA be incorporated into the reconciliation bill to create a larger “economic” package. Regardless of the outcome, July will be an interesting month in Congress so stay tuned for additional updates!

Another LeadingAge Workforce Win. House Appropriators Urge HRSA to Address Older Adults

Workforce Shortages. The House Appropriations Committee passed the fiscal year (FY) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill on June 30, 2022. The bill includes several wins for LeadingAge, that would help to increase the nation’s aging services workforce. The bill allocates funding for several federal programs that are of interest to LeadingAge and are highlighted in an article [here](#). Among other things, the bill includes: nearly \$2 billion in new money for the Department of Labor, including for apprenticeship programs, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity state grants, and Senior Community Service Employment; \$15.6 billion in new money for HHS to enhance nursing workforce development and other health care programs; and enhanced funding for targeted programs of the Administration on Community Living. The Committee also adopted [a manager’s amendment from House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro](#) (D-CT), that added language to the committee report that urges the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to “address the skilled care workforce needs of seniors through existing workforce education and training programs.”

According to the committee report, “the Committee supports HRSA’s efforts to develop the workforce needed to care for a rapidly aging U.S. population. The Committee report encourages HRSA to address the skilled care workforce needs of seniors through existing workforce education and training programs.” This language was added as a new paragraph after the “Grant-Based Program to Include Disability Clinical Care Competency Training Program,” that would be developed in collaboration with the National Council on Disability, community-based organizations, health professions schools and minority health and public health and disability groups, and several other entities. Additionally, the committee report requires a HRSA report and analysis of technology’s role in the public health care workforce. The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the Labor-HHS appropriations bill after the

Telehealth during the pandemic. Fair Health recently released an issue brief looking at “[The Evolution of Telehealth during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)” utilizing data from their [Monthly Telehealth Regional Tracker](#). Many changes in telehealth utilization were likely related to the course of the pandemic. For 6 of the 12 months of 2021, telehealth utilization fell from the level of utilization in the prior month. Nevertheless, it remained much higher than before the pandemic. For example, in spring and summer 2021, telehealth claim lines dropped as vaccination levels increased. In fall and winter 2021, however, telehealth utilization rose again as the Delta and Omicron variants led to increased COVID-19 cases. The brief also notes that mental health conditions have been the most common telehealth diagnosis nationally throughout the pandemic.

Diverse Elders has launched a new [website](#) featuring updated information on their trainings, including the Caring for Those Who Care curriculum, which is a resource for aging professionals to learn about the

unique needs of diverse family caregivers. The training curriculum will equip professionals with insights into the lived experiences of the following populations: African American and Black Caregivers, American Indian and Alaska Native Caregivers, Chinese American and Korean American Caregivers, Hispanic and Latino Caregivers, LGBTQ+ Caregivers, and Southeast Asian American Caregivers.

COVID was the third leading cause of death in the US in both 2020 and 2021. A study conducted by researchers at the National Cancer Institute and published today in [JAMA Internal Medicine](#) found that COVID accounted for 1 in every 8 deaths between March 2020 and October 2021. Interestingly, in 2020, COVID was the second leading cause of death in 2020, but fell to third in 2021; the researchers opined that targeted vaccinations in this age group caused the change. The researchers also found that the pandemic indirectly caused increased deaths during the study period from other causes such as heart disease, accidents, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease and diabetes, possibly because people were reluctant or unable to seek medical care. The NCI researchers also suggest that cancer deaths may increase in the future as a result of individuals skipping preventive screenings during the pandemic.

Now Available: June Webinar Recordings. Access is now available to both June webinar recordings. [Navigating the Employee Retention Credit \(ERC\)](#) helps aging services providers understand the nuances of the ERC, the claims process, and eligibility requirements. The [Active Shooter Preparedness webinar](#) provides organizations with critical decision-making techniques and safety protocols that can save lives. [View all LeadingAge webinars](#) on topics ranging from Cybersecurity to Survey Readiness.

Annual Meeting Registration: Update Your My.LeadinAge Username/Password. 2022 LeadingAge Annual Meeting + EXPO registration will open next week! To register, you’ll need your My.LeadinAge login information. [Reset or recover your password here.](#) We’re excited to see you in Denver on October 16-19!

The Tools You Need to Tell the Positive Story of Aging Services. Opening Doors to Aging Services is a national-local initiative to introduce the aging services sector to Americans—and to shift perceptions positively. Watch this [short overview video](#) and explore the research, communications strategies, and other assets on [OpeningDoors.org](#). Also check out these [QuickCasts and workshops](#) to help tell an authentic story of aging services and move perceptions positively with Opening Doors!