



Workforce Policy Weekly

August 26, 2020

LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Calls Next Week. On Monday, August 29, 3:30pm ET, Ben Oseroff, co-author of a study on homebound Americans will join us to discuss his profile of homebound older adults, their needs and ways to address them. On Wednesday, August 31, 3:30pm ET, hear from David Putrino, Director of Rehabilitation Innovation for the Mt Sinai Health System, and an Associate Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mt Sinai, who will talk about the dangers of working while having COVID. 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

National Workforce Development Month. LeadingAge is excited to kick off [National Workforce Development Month](#) in September – a month to celebrate our dedicated workforce in aging services and support its development through new resources. Coming soon! Check out our turnkey member resources with everything you need to join in the campaign throughout the month. [Submit your story](#) on practical workforce innovations and celebrating the dedicated work of caregiving professionals in your community.

Ask Your Representative to Join the House 21st Century Long-Term Care Caucus. As we have shared, Representatives Bryan Steil (R-WI) and Ann Kuster (D-NH) established a new bipartisan House 21st Century Long-Term Care Caucus. The Co-Chairs are now [inviting](#) their fellow Members of Congress to join the Caucus. Congressional offices can contact Lizzy Burke in Representative Kuster's office at lizzy.burke@gmail.house.gov, or Charlotte Davis in Representative Steil's office at Charlotte.davis@mail.house.gov, if they have any questions or would like to join the 21st Century Long-term Care Caucus.

House Bill Would Study Impact of Staffing Agency Price Gouging. If enacted, the Travel Nursing Agency Transparency Study Act, would require the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study on the business practices and the impact of hiring "travel" nurse agencies across the healthcare field during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the GOP Doctors Caucus, Reps. Greg Murphy, M.D. (R-NC) and Mariannette Miller-Meeks, 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 bill would require the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study and report to Congress on the business practices and the impact of hiring "travel" nurse agencies across the healthcare field during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read more about the bill [here](#).

Healthcare Workers: Health, Stress, and Mental Health. CDC's National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has [launched a multi-year initiative](#) to improve the mental health and well-being of the nation's health workforce. For many of the 20 million health workers in the U.S., already challenging work conditions (long work hours, heavy workloads, and exposure to human suffering and death) have intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. These conditions have led to new and worsening mental

health concerns, including burnout, compassion fatigue, depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, and suicidal ideation. This initiative emphasizes the importance of intervening *before* work stress negatively impacts mental health. NIOSH Director Dr. John Howard and U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy kicked-off the initiative with the webinar [Protecting Health Worker Mental Health: A Call-to-Action](#).

Resources:

- [Healthcare Workers: Work Stress & Mental Health](#)—Why health workers are more likely to experience mental health problems
- [Healthcare Workers: Work Stress & Mental Health Resources](#)—Resources for stress, fatigue, burnout, substance use and suicide

LeadingAge Urges HUD Secretary to End Service Coordinator Funding Delays. LeadingAge and the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC) sent a letter urging HUD to immediately release authorized funding for HUD's Service Coordination program. The letter outlines immediate steps the agency can take to improve program administration now and, in the future, as HUD-assisted housing providers across the country are forced to disrupt services to the hundreds of thousands of low-income older adults they serve. For the second year in a row, the annual grant payments will be at least 9 months late to housing providers. The letter outlines the harm done by the major delays in grant funding and urges the HUD Secretary to increase IT and staffing capacity to better administer the Service Coordinator program, among other steps. More information is available [here](#).

Sanford Health Hosts Rural Health Care Summit. Sanford Health convened leaders from around the country and various walks of life from health care to educational institutions to Congressional leaders to technology organizations for a Rural Health Care Summit in Sioux Falls, SD on Tuesday, August 23. The Summit examined the current situation and needs for maintaining access to health care in rural America. Much of the discussion was on the lessons learned from the pandemic highlighting the need and opportunity to improve access for all through telehealth services. This approach showed promise during the pandemic by eliminating the need for long hours of travel for patients and exposure to COVID in waiting rooms, while broadening access to specialists. The importance of high-speed, broadband internet access to ensure this access was underscored by speakers. Senator John Thune noted that addressing workforce needs was “job #1” and would likely require a public-private partnership. He said he had heard from many nursing and long-term care facilities on the challenges they are facing and acknowledged that reimbursement issues must be addressed. Few solutions were offered though most speakers believe that telehealth will be critical to the future but that the current FFS reimbursement system structure isn't designed for this approach to care. Most felt that rural America should lead the way in transforming the future of health care delivery and addressing access, instead of waiting to follow. LeadingAge was in attendance at the event.