



Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

February 10, 2023

LeadingAge Policy Update Calls, covering all the updates aging services providers need on what goes on in Washington and what it means for you and the people you serve, care for, and house, including but not limited to Coronavirus. Long COVID patient – study thyself! On **Monday, February 13**, Lisa McCorkell will join us to talk about the Patient-Led Research Collaborative, a group of Long COVID patients who are also researchers. Their mission is to facilitate patient-led and patient-involved research into Long Covid and associated conditions while following rigorous research methodology and to advocate for policies that enable patients, particularly the most marginalized, to access care and live with dignity. The pandemic has exhausted workers.

Join us on **Wednesday, February 15** to hear from Michele Holleran, Founder and CEO of Holleran Consulting. Michele will talk about best practices to improve supervisor well-being. 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.

CDC adds Covid-19 vaccines to its official immunization schedule for children, adolescents, and adults.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention added Covid-19 vaccinations for children, adolescents, and adults to its immunization schedule. These updates reflect current agency recommendations. Adding them formalizes that guidance for health care providers and schools. The CDC's vaccination schedule, released February 9, does not mandate vaccines. The FDA's vaccine advisory committee recently voted unanimously to recommend that all primary vaccination series switch to the updated bivalent shot, but the agency has yet to adopt these recommendations. The committee also discussed a possible path forward to include yearly Covid-19 booster vaccinations, similar to the annual flu shot, but didn't formalize any action. [More information on adult immunization schedule by age here](#).

SOTU Through an Aging Services Lens. In the President's State of the Union speech on February 7, he made references to several issues and goals related to aging services. Some highlights include:

- "Covid no longer controls our lives." Six words everyone is ready to hear, especially those who provide or use aging services.
- "We're protecting seniors' lives and life savings by cracking down on nursing homes that commit fraud, endanger patient safety, or prescribe drugs they don't need." This was the only reference to nursing homes (much shorter than last year). It's critical to note that LeadingAge's message may have gotten through because this statement does not bucket all nursing homes together. He referred only to those providers who engage in these illegal or unethical behaviors. Still, LeadingAge will be meeting with the Nursing Home Quality Initiative team to continue driving home the point that most providers do not fit this description and deserve accolades for their mission focused work.
- Guaranteeing all workers a living wage. LeadingAge has long advocated this position, coupled with reimbursement rates to pay such wages.

- “Let’s get all families access to affordable and quality housing.” LeadingAge agrees wholeheartedly, especially housing for low-income seniors.
- Helping older individuals stay in their homes. This point followed the housing point, seemingly tying them together. Supporting enactment of expansions like those proposed in Better Care Better Jobs bills that have been introduced in both chambers will move us closer to this end. (See LeadingAge Action Alert, below.)
- Don’t cut Social Security and Medicare, lifelines for millions of older people. The President said, “stand up for seniors!” Medicare, of course, is also a lifeline for many providers of post-acute care.

LeadingAge will continue to advocate for establishing an office on aging in the White House to keep the focus on these goals and action plans.

Leaders of Color Advocacy Webinar Series - Session Two: Let’s Talk About State Advocacy. Effective advocacy at the state level is becoming more important with each passing year. This Tuesday, February 14 webinar, from 2 – 3:15 pm ET, will help you understand how state advocacy works, how it impacts providers of aging services, and how people at all levels of an aging services organization can become engaged in advocacy. Leaders of color will reflect on their advocacy journeys and will describe how they navigated the advocacy process; the types of advocacy work they pursued; and the practical benefits they, their team members, and residents/clients experienced. LeadingAge state executives will share examples of their advocacy work, explore the importance of building relationships with state legislators and Governor’s office staff, and discuss their engagement with U.S. state senators and congressmen about issues related to their communities. Register for the February 14 webinar [here](#).

New KFF Report Identifies the Medicare Advantage Plans with Most Prior Authorization Rejections. A new Kaiser Family Foundation [report](#) found over 35 million prior authorization requests were submitted to Medicare Advantage Plans in 2021. Additional Key Findings:

- The volume of prior authorization determinations varied across Medicare Advantage insurers, ranging from 0.3 requests per Kaiser Permanente enrollee to 2.9 requests per Anthem enrollee.
- Over 2 million prior authorization requests were fully or partially denied by Medicare Advantage insurers.
- Just 11 percent of prior authorization denials were appealed.
- The vast majority (82%) of appeals resulted in fully or partially overturning the initial prior authorization denial.

CDC Health Alert Related to Artificial Tears. CDC Health Alert Network has issued a Health Advisory related to outbreaks of extensively drug-resistant infections linked with use of artificial tears. Infections have been reported in 12 states and are linked with more than 10 different brands of artificial tears. CDC recommends immediately discontinuing use of EzriCare Artificial Tears pending additional guidance from CDC and FDA. Monitor for signs of infection in individuals who have used EzriCare Artificial Tears and perform culture and antimicrobial susceptibility testing when indicated. Read more on this issue [here](#).

CDC Releases Falls Intervention Compendium. CDC has released the 4th edition of its Effective Fall Interventions Compendium. This resource is designed to assist senior service providers, clinicians, and others address older adult falls in community. Learn more and download the resource [here](#).

LeadingAge Tip Sheet for Commenting on the CY2024 Medicare Advantage (MA) proposed rules.

LeadingAge shared its [tip sheet](#) for commenting on these proposed rules, which will govern how MA, Special Needs Plans, Part D plans and PACE providers operate in CY2024. Aspects of these rules seek to respond to issues LeadingAge has raised about beneficiary access to traditional Medicare benefits for those enrolled in MA plans and the prior authorization processes that plans use to make determinations about access to those benefits. LeadingAge is currently drafting its comments for the February 13, 5p.m. ET deadline based upon feedback from members but we also encourage members to share their thoughts on whether what CMS is proposing will correct these challenges with the MA program. The [tip sheet](#) explains the key issues in the proposed rule issues and what we are hearing from members. Members should feel free to comment only on the items of interest to them. They do not need to comment on all issues in the proposed rules.

Applications Process Open for 2023-24 Health and Aging Policy Fellowships. The Health and Aging Policy Fellowship program (HAPF) announced it will accept applications for 2023-24 until April 17. The fellowship year begins on October 1, 2023. HAPF aims to create a cadre of leaders who will serve as change agents in health and aging policy to ultimately improve the health care of older adults. The yearlong program funds fellows to spend a year in a national policy position. The program offers training in the policy landscape, communication skills, and professional networking opportunities. HAPF will offer a series of sessions for potential applicants and other interested individuals. Check the [HAPF website](#) for application details and the schedule for information sessions.