



## Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

March 24, 2023

**Upcoming LeadingAge Policy Update Call on Monday, March 27, at 3:30pm ET.** On the Monday, March 27, Policy Update Call we will have **Dr. Alice Bonner from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) to talk about Age-Friendly Health Systems**, which are health systems that reliably provide a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the “4Ms,” to all older adults in its system: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility. Dr. Bonner will be joined by **Kim Church, National Lead for Age-Friendly Health Systems, Veterans Health Administration’s Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**, to talk about the VA’s experience adopting Age-Friendly Health Systems. You can also find previous call recordings of every 3:30 LeadingAge call [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.

**More Changes for NHSN Reporting.** Several weeks ago, LeadingAge suggested to CMS and CDC that NHSN reporting be reevaluated with the coming end of the public health emergency in May. LeadingAge learned on March 23 that NHSN changes are currently under review. The changes will once again streamline reporting, removing or changing data elements that no longer provide meaningful information or for which the use of the data is no longer supported. LeadingAge provided preliminary feedback and will continue dialogue with CDC on the proposed changes that remain under review at this time. It is not expected that changes will be released until late spring.

**Nursing Home Network.** The LeadingAge Nursing Home Network will meet next Tuesday, March 28, 2pm ET, to review the latest policy updates and share feedback among members. Register for the network [here](#). Read a summary of the February meeting [here](#).

**GAO Releases Report on Nursing Home Infection Control.** The Government Accountability Office released a report on March 20 detailing the findings from an expert roundtable convened to explore infection prevention and control practices in nursing homes. The roundtable identified six actions HHS should continue, such as NHSN reporting, emphasis on infection prevention and control, and utilizing strike teams; seven actions HHS should enhance including emergency preparedness requirements, infection prevention and control training, and the use of non-monetary enforcement actions; and one action to discontinue, extended use of limitations on visitation and group activities. Access the full report and highlights [here](#).

**Nursing Homes Must Take Extra Steps to Report Flu Vax Data:** Nursing homes must report healthcare personnel flu vaccination data through NHSN by May 15, 2023 for the SNF Quality Reporting Program. Note that data must be reported through a different NHSN component than COVID data is currently reported, and this component must be activated prior to reporting. Read more [here](#), including what to do to activate this component

**CMMI expands Value Based Insurance Design Model for 5 more years.** The model will run from 2025-2030 and will introduce changes intended to more fully address the health-related social needs of

patients, advance health equity, and improve care coordination for patients with serious illness. More information will be provided later in the year.

**Meeting with CMS on Emergency Preparedness.** LeadingAge participated in a meeting with CMS on Emergency Preparedness requirements on March 14. The meeting was coordinated by our emergency preparedness consultant Jensen Hughes to facilitate conversation on current issues. Feedback was shared related to FSES mandatory values, generator fuel storage, building systems risk assessments, and customary access. CMS acknowledged concerns and welcomed continued dialogue. The intent is to continue these “check-ins” on a regular basis.

**Green Initiatives: A Ziegler Report.** In a recent CFO Hotline [Survey](#), Ziegler asked organizations about their ‘going green’ efforts; highlights are summarized below. (Notably, 67% of all organizations that participated were single-site organizations.) When asked if the community has an electric vehicle charging station, 40% said they did, and 15% have plans to install charging stations in the near future. The slight majority (55%) of all communities with charging stations do not charge residents, staff or guests to use the stations; a staggering 84% of organizations did not receive a grant or outside funding to pay for the stations to be installed. On the flip side, only 15% of all participating organizations have adopted electric vehicles for their community fleet. When asked about solar panels, the adoption rates were far lesser; only 13% have already installed panels, and 6% plan to do so in the near future. When compared to other regions of the country, those organizations that are located in the western United States had the highest adoption rates of both electric vehicles and solar panels.

**Congress Looks at CMS Response to 2022 Data Breach.** On March 20, House Oversight Committee Chair James Comer from Kentucky and House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers from Washington announced they would investigate CMS for its response to a data breach of a subcontractor in October 2022 that put the personal data of more than 250,000 Medicare beneficiaries at risk. [In a letter to CMS](#), the lawmakers noted it took two months to determine that the attack was a “major incident” before alerting Congress. According to a CMS spokesperson, CMS will respond to the letter directly, but pointed to a [CMS press release](#) issued in December that outlined the agency’s next steps, which included notifying beneficiaries of the breach, and supplying them with an updated Medicare Beneficiary Identifier and credit monitoring services free of charge.

**Study Finds While End-of-Life Care Stable During COVID, Spiritual Care Lacking.** A new [study](#) published in JAMDA identified 1,050 decedents using the National Health and Aging Trends Study and family caregivers post death interviews to assess quality of care their family members received for individuals both pre and during the pandemic as well as individuals with and without dementia. The study found the overall rating of care during the pandemic was deemed “not excellent” compared to individuals who died prior to the pandemic. Additionally, people who had dementia appeared to be more likely to have unmet spiritual needs at the end of life. Otherwise, dementia and the pandemic were not found to have a significant impact on the study indicators and caregivers’ overall rating of care quality.

**Federal Bill Would Expand Medicare, Medicaid Coverage for Dental, Vision, Hearing.** A new piece of legislation ([the Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act](#)) introduced by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) would help Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries access comprehensive dental, vision and hearing care under federal and state insurance programs. Some older adults can access these health services through Medicare Advantage plans or short-term individual plans, but often they come with high out-of-pocket costs. Dental, vision and hearing issues

affect older adults in many ways such as development of cardiovascular disease, exacerbating fall risks, and increasing social isolation.

**ACL Proposes to Expand their Direct Care Workforce Priorities.** In September 2022, HHS' Administration for Community Living (ACL) established a national technical assistance center to help strengthen the direct care workforce. With FY 2023 funding, ACL is beginning to build a hub through which state, private, and federal entities involved in the recruitment, training and retention of direct care workers can access model policies, best practices, training materials, technical assistance, and learning collaboratives. In FY 2024, ACL requests \$11.5 million to fully fund operation of the resource hub and to support development of new approaches, as follows:

- Aging Network Support Activities – Direct Care Workforce (+\$8 million) to fully fund hub operations and establish demonstration grants to test recruiting, retention, and training approaches that can be replicated and scaled across states.
- Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance (+\$3 million)/Independent Living Projects of National Significance (+\$500,000) to extend the scope of the above-described initiatives to the direct care workforce that supports people with disabilities who are not covered by the statutory authority of Older Americans Act.

The Direct Care Workforce information can be found on page 12 of the *FY'24 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees* (found [here](#) on the ACL website). An article with additional details is available [here](#).

**Nursing Home Weekly Update for the week of March 13, 2023.** [Nursing Home Update.](#)