



Home Health Weekly: Recap of Leading Age Updates

September 8, 2023

LeadingAge Policy Update Calls; all calls are at 3:30 PM ET. On a recent call both our guest, Darcie Baggott and Jenna talked about connecting younger kids with aging services early. LeadingAge member, the James L. West Center for Dementia Care has a program that engages middle school students in care. **Kristie Boiles**, who created and runs that program, will join us on **Monday, September 11** to talk about it. Join us for this fruitful conversation.

Students participating in medical, nursing, and therapy programs rarely identify working with the geriatric population as a primary goal. Two key elements that have been associated with improving students' openness to pursuing a career in geriatrics are increased clinical education opportunities with older adults and rigorous program curricula covering geriatric competencies outlined by professional organizations. Join us on **Wednesday September 13** to hear from Jessica Dunn, Director of Clinical Education at Seton Hall University talk about the barriers related to staffing and retention as well as best practice strategies to improve recruitment, retention, and engagement of quality geriatric practitioners.

Social isolation and loneliness have been associated with an increased risk of dementia and premature mortality from all causes. The pandemic has exacerbated the loneliness issue, but it has also increased acceptance of virtual engagement to meet social needs. Join us on **Monday September 18** to hear from Meghan Young, Associate Director for Opening Minds through Art (OMA) at the Scripps Gerontology Center, Miami University. She will talk about a new virtual tool has been developed to engage older and younger adults in meaningful conversations and fun activities.

Members and other interested individuals can sign up to join LeadingAge's Policy Update calls [here](#). 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.

OIG Report Finds Home Health Agencies Failed to Report Half of Falls with Major Injury. A [report](#) released from the Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that home health agencies failed to report on the OASIS assessment falls with major injury that resulted in a hospitalization for more than half of patients. Based on this, OIG concluded that the high rate of non-reporting impacted the accuracy of Care Compare information about incidence of these falls. This element of OASIS reporting has been required since 2019 and CMS began publicly reporting the information in 2022. Reporting of these falls was lower in for-profit agencies than non-profit agencies. Additionally, OIG found that for many home health patients who fell and were hospitalized, no OASIS assessment was completed putting agencies out of compliance with regulatory requirements. OIG made four key recommendations, to which CMS concurred:

1. Take steps to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the HHA reported OASIS data used to calculate the falls with major injury quality measure.
2. Use data sources, in addition to OASIS assessments, to improve the accuracy of the quality measure related to falls with major injury.
3. Ensure that HHAs submit required OASIS assessments when their patients are hospitalized.

4. Explore whether improvements to the quality measure related to falls can also be to improve the accuracy of other home health measures.

HHS Issues Proposed Rule to Protect People with Disabilities from Discrimination. A new [proposed rule](#) from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Civil Rights would mandate that treatment decisions are not made based on preconceptions of a person's disability by any program receiving funding from HHS. This rule would update critical sections of regulation pertaining to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Comments on the proposed rule are due Monday, November 13. More specifically, the proposed rule would:

1. Ensure that medical treatment decisions are not based on biases or stereotypes about individuals with disabilities, judgments that an individual will be a burden on others, or beliefs that the life of an individual with a disability has less value than the life of a person without a disability.
2. Clarify obligations for web, mobile, and kiosk accessibility.
3. Establish enforceable standards for accessible medical equipment.
4. Clarify requirements in HHS-funded child welfare programs and activities.
5. Prohibit the use of value assessment methods that place a lower value on life-extension for individuals with disabilities when that method is used to limit access or to deny aids, benefits, and services.
6. Clarify obligations to provide services in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of individuals with disabilities.

LeadingAge CMMI Webinar Recording on the GUIDE Dementia Model is Now Available. On August 30, LeadingAge hosted a webinar where the CMS Innovation Center (CMMI) staff discussed the Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) model and how aging service providers might lead or participate in the model. If you missed it or want to listen to it again, the recording is now available on the LeadingAge Learning Hub and can be found [here](#). Those who may be interested in being part of the model are reminded that the Letter of Intent to participate is due on September 15.

Senator Cassidy Suggests Separate Approach for Regulating AI in Health Care. Articles on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) use in health care and other fields are ubiquitous this year. One area that LeadingAge members are familiar with is when Medicare Advantage plans use third-party tools, such as NaviHealth or MyNexus, to make generalized coverage determinations. LeadingAge has asked CMS to limit these tools' use as they don't examine the needs of the individual but instead suggest a treatment timeline based upon the typical person with the same diagnosis. Congress has been evaluating establishing some regulation around AI and on September 6, Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) suggested that AI in health care should have its own regulations, noting, "a sweeping, one-size-fits-all approach for regulating AI will not work and will stifle, not foster, innovation. The Senate is ramping up its AI work according to Congressional Quarterly with another Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation subcommittee hearing on AI scheduled for September 12.

CMMI Announces New State Model. The CMS Innovation Center announced a new [Advancing All Payer Health Equity Approaches and Development](#) (AHEAD) Model on September 5. It is the first state total cost of care model, which seeks to transform state and regional health care and utilize multi-payer alignment. Under the model, the state will be responsible for controlling overall growth in health care expenditures. Interested states will be able to apply to participate in one of two application periods – Fall 2023 and Spring 2024. CMS will select up to 8 states to participate and includes options for states who need more time to implement the model to participate. Selected states will be eligible to receive up

to \$12 million in funding over the first 6 years of the 11-year model. CMS indicates that the model seeks to promote health equity, increase primary care access, establish a sustainable health care spending trajectory and lower per patient health care costs. The model is designed to serve all payer populations – duals, Medicare only, Medicaid only, and private pay. CMS will be hosting a webinar on September 18 from 3:00 - 4:30 PM ET on the details of the model. Registration information for the webinar is not yet available.

Department of Labor Monthly Jobs Report Shows Growth in Healthcare Jobs, Yet Demand for Workers Continues to Exceed Supply. According to a [September 1 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the number of healthcare jobs increased by 71,000 in August, up from 63,000 added in July. Hospitals (+14,500), nursing and residential care facilities (+16,500), and home health care services (+11,000) all saw growth in August. Job increases in nursing and residential care services for August exceeded the 11,500 added in July. In aggregate, the U.S. added 187,000 non-farm jobs last month, the same number as were added in July. The nation's unemployment rate rose by 0.3 percentage point to 3.8 percent in August, which is little different from a year earlier, when the unemployment rate was 3.7 percent. The Bureau's [Job Openings and Labor Turnover report for July 2023](#), however, confirms that demand for labor continues to notably exceed supply, with [data showing](#) a ratio of 0.7 unemployed persons per job opening - i.e., there are approximately 1.5 jobs for every one individual seeking employment.

Last Week's Home Health Weekly Update. Here is the September 1, 2023 [Home Health Update](#).