



Medicaid HCBS and PACE Weekly Recap

December 13, 2024

Next PACE Network Call: December 19 @ 1 p.m. ET; Register [here](#)

Next Adult Day Network Call: January 23, 2025 @ 1 p.m. ET; Register [here](#)

National Policy Pulse: 2024 Holiday Schedule and 2025 Updates. Over 700 of your LeadingAge peers join us weekly for our National Policy Pulse calls when we keep members equipped to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of aging services national policy. Here's how to stay engaged in the new year: If you're currently registered for 2024 National Policy Pulse calls, you'll remain registered for 2025 calls automatically. If you're interested in signing up for the calls (and are currently not registered), please sign up using [the link on our National Policy Pulse webpage](#). Holiday schedule:

- No call on Monday, December 23 or Monday, December 30, 2024.
- Calls will resume on Monday, January 6, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. ET.

If you would prefer to be removed from the list, please email [Janine Finck-Boyle](#).

Action Alert on Medicaid Advocacy 2025: We have written an action alert on the need to protect Medicaid from cuts and programmatic changes that would limit access to Medicaid coverage and services. Congress is actively discussing moving forward with budget reconciliation early in 2025 and as part of this process, Medicaid cuts are on the table for inclusion so we are asking that members express their support for the Medicaid program through the alert found [here](#).

The Senate Passes the Older Americans Act Reauthorization(OAA). On December 10, the Senate passed the Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2024(S.4776), a critical piece of legislation that strengthens and modernizes services for older adults through 2029. OAA, sponsored by Sen. Sanders(I-VT), includes provisions to enhance access to nutrition programs, caregiver support, elder justice initiatives, and other essential services that promote the well-being and independence of older adults. The bill now advances to the House of Representatives for consideration. LeadingAge influenced the reauthorization responding to Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions(HELP) committee request for information, participated in key meetings with Senate staffers and worked with advocacy groups to shape and advance the OAA reauthorization and will be working to ensure House passage.

Congress sends letter to Dr. Oz regarding Medicare Advantage and conflicts of interest. On December 10, Senators Warren (D-MA), Wyden (D-OR), Blumenthal (D-CT), Durbin (D-IL), Merkley (D-OR), and Cardin (D-MD) along with Rep Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) sent a letter to CMS Administrator Designate Dr. Mehmet Oz regarding his previous statements on Medicare Advantage vs. Traditional Medicare. The letter highlights Dr. Oz's previous statements on wanting "Medicare Advantage for All" and calling traditional Medicare "highly dysfunctional." They ask a number of questions about Dr. Oz's investments including significant stock holdings in United Healthcare. The letter can be found [here](#).

Hearing Proceedings Begin Concerning Marijuana Rescheduling. Formal hearing proceedings regarding the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) proposed rescheduling of marijuana began on December 2. This first convening served as a procedural day to address legal and logistical issues, including for presiding

Administrative Law Judge John Mulrooney to ask questions of the organizations and individuals DEA has selected and designated as hearing participants. Shortly after, on December 4, Judge Mulrooney issued a [pre-hearing ruling](#) that sets a schedule, running from January 1 to March 6, for when participants will present information and testimony in the hearing. DEA will be the first to present, then other witnesses will follow, starting with organizations supporting the proposed rescheduling and followed by organizations opposed. Once the hearing concludes, the ALJ will submit its findings to the DEA, which DEA will consider, along with public comments submitted during the rulemaking and other information, to make a final determination about whether and how to finalize the proposed rule.

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Releases Analysis of Childcare's Impact on Employment. The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago has released a [comprehensive analysis](#) highlighting how childcare challenges are increasingly keeping parents out of the workforce, with significant implications for employers. The study examines U.S. Census data across three periods—pre-pandemic, peak pandemic, and post-pandemic (2022–2024)—to understand the evolving impact of childcare issues on labor force participation. The analysis found that the number of parents citing childcare problems as the main reason for not participating in the labor force, working part-time, or missing workdays has risen by 19% from the pre-pandemic period to the present day and mothers with children under five are more than twice as likely to be affected by childcare issues compared to fathers or mothers with older children. Contributing Factors include rising cost of childcare, with many families spending amounts comparable to housing costs on child care. Additionally, the childcare industry faces its own labor shortages, with employment remaining 9% below pre-pandemic levels as of late 2023. This gap limits the availability of childcare services for working parents. There are significant implications for the labor market as employers report difficulty hiring due to potential employees being unable to secure reliable childcare and employees missing workdays or working part-time because of childcare issues can lead to decreased productivity and increased operational challenges. The analysis highlights the critical intersection between childcare accessibility and stabilizing labor markets. LeadingAge is championing policies aimed at expanding access to childcare services, particularly for the aging services workforce, to address these challenges and support economic and workforce recovery.

Senate Judiciary Committee Holds Hearing Examining Impact of Mass Deportations. On Tuesday, December 10, 2024 Senator Dick Durbin(D-IL) Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing, [How Mass Deportations Will Separate American Families, Harm Our Armed Forces, and Devastate Our Economy](#). Senator Durbin and other lawmakers emphasized the importance of redirecting congressional efforts toward bipartisan solutions that provide border security while offering a pathway to citizenship for long-term residents and DACA recipients. Testimony was provided by a diverse panel of witnesses, including Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, Senior Fellow at the American Immigration Council; Foday Turay, a DACA recipient and Assistant District Attorney; Maj. General Randy Manner (Retired); Art Arthur, Resident Fellow in Law and Policy at the Center for Immigration Studies and Patty Morin. The hearing, marked by several fiery exchanges between multiple Senators and Senator Durbin noted in his opening statement the indispensable role immigrants play across a variety of sectors including caregiving. LeadingAge continues to call for comprehensive immigration reform to expand the aging services workforce recently releasing the [Immigration Imperative](#), a white paper offering practical policy recommendations to increase the pipeline of foreign-born workers in aging services.

Last week's Recap: [Medicaid HCBS and PACE weekly 12 6 24](#)