Workforce Weekly Recap
Friday, October 10, 2025

Weekly National Policy Pulse Calls. Join more than 1000 of your LeadingAge peers for our National Policy Pulse calls where we keep members equipped to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of aging services national policy. The calls are on Mondays at 3:30 p.m. ET. If you're interested in signing up for these members-only calls, please sign up using the link on our National Policy Pulse webpage.

Remote NCLEX Testing Likely to Launch in 2026. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) announced plans to introduce remote NCLEX testing potentially as early as 2026. Although no official launch date has been confirmed, the announcement is welcome news for nursing licensure accessibility. Remote NCLEX testing would allow eligible candidates to the take the exam from home or another approved location, eliminating the need to travel to an official test center. The exam would maintain the same content, length, scoring and standards as the in-person version, and remote testing would be optional – candidates could still choose to test at a center. Importantly, remote testing would be available to both U.S.-based and international nursing candidates. Regarding security, NCSBN says it will use advanced technology and robust measures for remote proctoring in order to ensure exam integrity. For test takers, the potential benefits would be myriad. Remote testing would offer candidates the flexibility to choose a time and location that suits them and the comfort of a familiar environment that could reduce stress and improve performance. Moreover, this development would reduce barriers to access, which may be particularly beneficial to international test takers who, in some cases, acquire substantial travel and visa costs to get to a testing center abroad. By lowering those logistical barriers and potentially speeding up licensure, this change could impact international nurse recruitment pipelines. LeadingAge will share updates as more details and a specific timeline become available.

Senate Confirmation of Third EEOC Commissioner Restores Quorum. On October 7, the U.S. Senate confirmed Brittany Panuccio by a 51–47 vote to serve as a commissioner of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Her term expires July 1, 2029. The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or employee. A body of five commissioners sets and implements policy, but, prior to Ms. Panuccio's confirmation, only two commissioners were in place. With her confirmation, the EEOC will regain the quorum of three commissioners required to advance President Trump's civil rights priorities through formal actions such as rescinding or adopting regulations and issuing or revising formal EEOC guidance. LeadingAge will follow future developments affecting the workplace as they unfold.

EPI Underscores Immigration is Essential to Addressing Workforce Gaps. In two recent reports, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) added to the widespread consensus among labor economists that U.S. workforce shortages cannot be solved without immigration. First, the U.S.-born labor force is projected to shrink annually over the next decade due to the population aging. As a result, immigration is forecast to account for nearly all labor force growth over that time. Moreover, EPI reports that labor force participation rates among U.S.-born individuals are currently near historic highs. Therefore, even the most ambitious policies to boost labor force participation among the U.S.-born—including prime-age workers—would not reverse these demographic trends meaningfully. Structural reforms that target known barriers to participation —like reducing incarceration, improving health, expanding childcare, and investing in

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education—can help, but their impact would be modest and delayed by years. In contrast, immigration directly offsets demographic decline. EPI also points out the larger economic and social implications of these conclusions about the labor force. Without immigration, the ratio of workers to retirees will worsen, straining programs like Social Security and Medicare. GDP growth would also slow and sectors like long-term care would struggle to meet demand. LeadingAge supports both domestic workforce policy that reduces barriers to labor force participation and immigration reform that expands pathways for essential workers to come to the U.S. to fill critical roles in sectors like aging services.

Staffing Standard Litigation Update: Victory Sealed in State-Led Lawsuit. In recent days the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit filed a judgment that brings to an end litigation concerning the CMS minimum staffing requirements. As we reported earlier, the U.S. Department of Health on September 18 filed motions to voluntarily dismiss the government's appeals of two federal court decisions that vacated the staffing requirements – namely, the favorable decisions earned by LeadingAge state partners and state Attorneys General in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa, and by LeadingAge and other plaintiffs in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. On September 19, the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit granted the government's motion to withdraw in the Texas case. All that remained was for the Eighth Circuit to do the same with respect to the Iowa case, and that Court officially entered judgment on October 3 granting the government's motion and dismissing the appeal. LeadingAge joins our State partners and members in celebrating the successful outcomes in both cases!

Update on Medicare Claims Processing During Shutdown. Per a Medicare Learning Network (MLN) newsletter sent on October 1, 2025, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS) clarified the impact of the legislative shutdown on Medicare payment processing. In the newsletter, Medicare Administrative Contractors (MAC) were directed to put a temporary hold on claims. This pause may prevent both the MACs and providers from incurring additional burden and cost associated with a need to reprocess claims denied due to the expiration of the telehealth and hospital at home waivers and similar items in the event that those services are ultimately extended by Congress as part of a continuing budget resolution or other action. The hold is only expected to last 10 business days, or until October 14, 2025. There is a statutory minimum payment floor of 14 days - meaning MACs hold electronic claims for 14 days before releasing payment regardless of the situation.

Keep up with all LeadingAge articles about the shutdown in LeadingAge's fiscal year 2026 serial post.