



Nursing Home Weekly Recap

February 13, 2026

Nursing Home Network Call: Tuesday, February 24, 2 p.m. ET. Join our monthly Nursing Home Network call on Tuesday, February 24 at 2 p.m. ET. We will review the latest nursing home updates, followed by time for feedback and discussion among members. The Nursing Home Network meets on the last Tuesday of each month and is open to all LeadingAge provider members. Register for the Network [here](#) using your LeadingAge login.

National Policy Pulse Call. Join over 1,000 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 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](#).

LeadingAge's 2026 Policy Platform. LeadingAge's approach to policy begins and ends with our members. Throughout the year, our eyes and ears are wide open, listening to members as they strive to provide the services and care needed by a population aging rapidly before them. Through LeadingAge's Member Networks, our weekly National Policy Pulse calls, site visits, member check-ins when at national and state conferences, we're listening to understand which of your needs, hurdles and opportunities could be supported, changed, or stopped by changes in federal policy and resources. Our policy platform emerges from these many conversations and is informed by evidence-based practices, data, and research. The policy platform guides LeadingAge advocacy on Capitol Hill and the federal agencies. The planks on the platform allow us to make quick decisions and take swift action on the issues that matter most across the continuum of aging services. Our continuum work allows us to advocate for a holistic approach to aging services and to ensure that a solution for one part of the continuum does not negatively impact another part of the continuum. The planks are interrelated as older adults use layers of programs and systems simultaneously; no one program or issue exists in a vacuum. Policy action is dynamic and full of disruption as well as opportunity. While our approach and engagement on certain issues may change as needs emerge, conversations occur, bills are introduced, rules and guidance are proposed, and other events take place, LeadingAge's values and priorities are constant. Read the platform [here](#).

Nursing Home Staffing Standards Bill Introduced in Senate. Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) introduced the [Nurses Belong in Nursing Homes Act](#) on February 12 that would require nursing homes to provide 3.48 hours per resident, per day (HPRD) of total nurse staffing and 24 hours per day, 7 days per week of registered nurse (RN) staffing. The bill eliminates the statutory waiver of nurse staffing and provides for future increases to staffing requirements. The bill would require a study of the sufficiency of staffing within two years of enactment and not less than every four years thereafter, with requirements for regulations to be implemented and updated within one year after each study reported to the Secretary. LeadingAge does not support the bill. LeadingAge remains concerned about staffing standards that do not consider the very real challenges of workforce shortages and inadequate reimbursement faced by many of our members and will be addressing these issues with members of Congress. Read our statement on the bill [here](#).

CMS Re-releases Nurse Incentive NOFO. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced on February 9 that they have re-opened the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Financial Incentive Administrators for the Nursing Home Staffing Campaign. Financial Incentive Administrators (FIAs) are public, private, and state institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations such as associations for nurses, nursing schools, and nursing students. Nursing homes and nursing home associations are ineligible to apply for this NOFO. This NOFO is part of CMS's Nursing Home Staffing Campaign and will fund FIAs to recruit registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and licensed vocational nurses (LVNs) to work in nursing homes and state survey agencies. [Read the NOFO here](#). The NOFO closes March 27, 2026. CMS intends to select FIAs in summer 2026. The FIAs will have time to set up infrastructure before beginning to recruit and place nurses and disburse funds. More information is forthcoming on eligibility criteria and procedures for nursing homes to be matched with incentivized nurses.

NURSE Visa Act Introduced to Address Severe Nursing Workforce Shortages. Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) introduced the National Urgent Recruitment for Skilled Employees (NURSE) Visa Act, [legislation](#) aimed at easing nationwide nursing shortages by expanding access to work visas for internationally trained nurses. Beyer noted that ongoing staffing challenges across the health care system driven by retirements, lingering effects of the pandemic, and sustained demand for nursing professionals contribute to shortages that are fueling burnout and threatening access to timely, high-quality care. His bill would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make available 20,000 nonimmigrant visas per fiscal year for nurses employed in areas designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as experiencing a nursing workforce shortage. Eligibility would be tied not only to the shortage designation but also to facility-level requirements, including having a provider-to-patient staffing ratio policy in place. Rep. Beyer previously introduced the legislation in 2024. For LeadingAge members, the Nurse Visa Act is notable as a legislative proposal focused on expanding legal immigration pathways specifically to address nursing shortages. LeadingAge supports the bill and will work with Rep. Beyer to seek bipartisan backing for this legislation.

Lorna Breen Act Reauthorized Through FY 2026 Appropriations. Congress reauthorized the [Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act](#) after including the measure in the [appropriations legislation](#) that was signed into law on February 3. First enacted in 2022, the Lorna Breen Act funds grants administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration to help health care employers address burnout, suicide risk, and behavioral health challenges through training, prevention, and system-level interventions. Through its partnership with the [Healthcare Workforce Coalition](#), LeadingAge supported the bill and welcomes its reauthorization, which preserves an important federal tool to support the mental health of caregivers at a time of ongoing workforce strain.

Department of Education Publishes Proposed Rule on "Professional Degrees." On January 30, as [expected](#), the Department of Education published a proposed [rule](#) intended to implement several higher-education provisions from H.R.1, including new parameters for federal student loan programs. Of particular interest to LeadingAge members is the proposal to revise the definition of "professional degree," which now plays a significant role in determining federal loan limits for advanced degree programs. H.R.1 established two tiers of loan caps: students enrolled in graduate programs may borrow up to \$20,500 annually with a \$100,000 lifetime limit, while students in programs classified as awarding a "professional degree" may access up to \$50,000 annually and \$200,000 total. Because this rule defines what constitutes a "professional degree," it will directly affect which students qualify for the higher

borrowing limits. LeadingAge is concerned that the proposed definition excludes several critical fields that underpin the aging-services workforce, including nursing, physical and occupational therapy, physicians' assistants, and social work. Members have also noted that rural communities are likely to feel the impact most acutely, as advanced practice clinicians often serve in roles typically filled by physicians in those settings. In addition, limiting borrowing capacity for graduate-level degrees could impact the number of nurse educators, having a downstream effect on training programs and the broader pipeline. The proposed rule is open for public comment for 30 days, with comments due by March 2. LeadingAge will submit comments on behalf of the association, and we encourage state partners and members to continue to share any perspectives, examples, or concerns they would like us to incorporate into our response.

Update on Haiti TPS: Government Appeals Court Ruling. On February 5, the federal government filed a [notice of appeal](#) challenging the February 2 court [decision](#) that temporarily halted the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti, which had been planned to take effect on February 3. This means that—for now—Haitian TPS holders retain their status and work authorization while litigation continues. The administration is expected to ultimately be successful in this litigation, and the longstanding policy direction remains clear—TPS for Haiti is likely to end in the near term. Nonetheless, this temporary window, though uncertain in duration, is a critical opportunity for continued awareness-raising and advocacy. Haitian TPS holders play indispensable roles in long-term care settings—as caregivers, support staff, and essential members of our workforce. Dedocumenting these legally authorized, experienced workers deepens our already-severe workforce shortages and disrupts care for older adults. One legislative effort meant to increase visibility and pressure on this issue is a discharge [petition](#) introduced by Representative Ayanna Pressley (D-MA). A discharge petition is a procedural tool that – if it successfully gathers 218 signatures in the House – bypasses leadership and forces a bill to the floor for a vote. This particular petition seeks to require a vote on legislation that would extend TPS for Haiti through 2029. While it faces very long odds, it is an important mechanism for demonstrating congressional concern and elevating the issue publicly. If your organization is interested in engaging in advocacy around TPS for Haiti or learning more about how to support this effort, please reach out. Your voice, and the voices of providers across the country, are essential in communicating what the loss of this workforce would mean for older adults and the mission-driven organizations that serve them.

New Nursing Home Reports in the LeadingAge Report Portal. The latest Five Star Analysis Reports have been updated in the LeadingAge Report Portal. These reports reflect updates to Nursing Home Care Compare originally scheduled for January 28 and updated on February 5. This January quarterly refresh includes updates to the overall Five Star Quality Rating and each of the domain ratings – health inspections, staffing, and quality measures. Additionally, this quarter's update includes the newly re-specified long-stay antipsychotics measure that is now based on both assessment data and claims data. Providers can use the Five Star Analysis Report from the LeadingAge Report Portal to demonstrate performance to their Board and to referral sources, as well as identifying areas for data-driven quality improvement. [Access your report here.](#)