

IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals
in 100 Words-or-Less

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They said it

"Health-related social needs, such as food security, housing quality, reliable transportation, and social support, are increasingly recognized as important contributors to individuals' health" Jeah Jung George Mason University professor on goal of NIH grant

"If data is missing that is common to both assessments, that's a "double hit" on the annual payment update" Pat Newberry, clinical reimbursement consultant with SimpleLTC on clarification of CMS' recent VBP assessment

"This study raises more questions than answers, and the researchers' bias is clearly on display" Rachel Reeves, AHCA/NCAL on a study that concluded state staffing mandates inflicted minimal impact on finances

3-Day Stay = Longer Hospital Time - No Reduction in M'care

In a study recently by Brown University researchers has brought the effectiveness of the 3-day stay into question.

the three-day rule was waived during the COVID-19 pandemic. After two years, the rule was reinstated.

The researchers found that patients used SNF care at similar rates when the three-day rule was suspended as when it was in place.

But when the rule was active, a significantly larger proportion of patients stayed in the hospital for at least three days, suggesting they were staying just long enough to qualify for coverage.

Brown Daily Herald, 02/27/2026

Say What? Staffing Mandates Don't Affect Bottom Line?

Nursing home advocates came out swinging after a study by researchers from the University of Pennsylvania and Lehigh University asserting that facilities did not suffer significant closures or harm due to state staffing mandates was released.

The study showed that state mandates in their various stages in the 2010-2023 window led to a 5% rise in non-registered nurse staffing while inflicting "minimal" impact on finances and closures.

Providers criticized what they called narrow or incomplete consideration of data and pointed out study limitations identified by researchers themselves as telltale signs of a flawed portrayal.

McKnight's, 03/04/2026

Providers Ain't Buying What Researchers Are Selling

Nursing home advocates came out swinging Tuesday after a study asserting that facilities did not suffer significant closures or harm due to state staffing mandates was released.

The study (see above) opined that state mandates led to a 5% rise in non-registered nurse staffing while inflicting "minimal" impact on finances.

"I'm disappointed to see the authors ascribe generalizability to a faulty and dated study," said Brendan Williams of the New Hampshire Health Care Association.

He noted there was no mention of Medicaid rates and the study acknowledged the one-time COVID-19 relief funds resulted in higher nursing home revenues.

McKnight's, 03/03/2026

More Scrutiny on PE Ownership of Nursing Homes

the Connecticut legislature's Aging Committee is considering a bill that would boost financial disclosure mandates and require owners to secure a performance bond or other form of security.

The nursing home bill would require facilities, beginning Feb. 15, 2027, to disclose a slew of records to the state

including the names and business addresses of all entities with a beneficial ownership interest, the names of directors, trustees and managing and general partners.

The proposed law would also require audited and certified financial statements, purchasing agreements and descriptions of any mortgage, loan or other financing used for acquisition or construction.

Senior Housing News, 02/27/2026

CMS Clarification Ups Risk of Falling Below 90% Threshold

CMS recently clarified how assessments are counted under the SNF Quality Reporting Program (QRP), while quietly collecting data on a slew of new measures due to be added to another nursing home program: SNF Value-Based Purchasing (VBP).

The PPS 5-day and PPS End-of-Stay assessments used to be submitted as one assessment but will now be counted as two separate assessments as part of the QRP program.

If one portion is incomplete, a nursing home may lose credit for one or both, increasing the risk of falling below the 90% data completion threshold needed to avoid a 2% annual payment penalty.

Skilled Nursing News, 02/20/2026

Time is Right to Expand SNFs' Influence Over ACOs

LTC operators are again calling on regulators to give them more control over ACOs, move they say could save Medicare \$2 billion annually.

The timing is right for change, especially with the new LEAD model still in its formative phase.

AHCA unveiled a whitepaper that updates and deepens its previous recommendations on value-based care model alignment policies within long term care.

In calling on CMS to develop a new ACO model specifically focused on nursing and assisted living facilities, the association pointed out that Current models were designed primarily for individuals not in a care facility and are centered on clinician-driven care.

McKnight's, 03/01/2026

IN THE TRENCHES – Vaccines, COVID, Flu, Measles & Other Outbreaks Around the World

WASHINGTON, D.C: The FDA has reversed course and told Moderna it would review its application for a new flu vaccine. The agency told Moderna earlier this month that it would not review the submission because of a dispute over the design of a clinical trial, sparking an industry backlash and raising questions about broader decision-making at the FDA. The decision was made by top agency official Vinay Prasad, who STAT previously reported had overruled career scientists in the vaccine center (*Stat*).

AMERICA: Moderna lashed out at the FDA for making it harder for companies to create new medicines, escalating a dispute between the vaccine maker and the regulator. In a call with analysts, Moderna CEO Stephane Bancel said the agency had become unpredictable. If the FDA keeps it up, it “threatens US leadership in innovative medicines” (*Bloomberg*).

AMERICA: With 160 new confirmed measles cases in the past week, the nation’s cases soared past 1,000 and reached 1,136, the CDC said in its weekly update, putting the United States on pace to exceed last year’s 2,281 total by springtime. Of the 1,136 cases, 24% are in children younger than 5 years, and 81% involve children and young adults up to 19 years old. Only 4% of case-patients have been fully vaccinated (*CDC Weekly Update*).

ENGLAND: A study by the universities of Bristol and Oxford encompassing over 3 million adults aged 50+ who had the autumn 2022 vaccine in England, revealed booster vaccines reduced the risk of COVID-19–related hospitalization and death. The effectiveness was similar for Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech booster vaccines, but protection declined over time. The study found boosted individuals had much lower 350-day risks of COVID-19 hospitalization (3.78 vs 6.81 per 1,000) and death (0.29 vs 0.61 per 1,000) (*Vaccine*).

AMERICA: Two phase 1 clinical trials of a nasal spray containing influenza virus–specific monoclonal antibodies conclude that it’s safe—although it won’t replace flu vaccination because it stays in the nose for only a few hours, researchers say. The trial findings form the basis for efficacy studies in people and suggest that the spray may fill a gap by quickly providing short-term protection in a flu pandemic, particularly for high-risk populations such as health care workers (*Science Translational Medicine*).

MICHIGAN: A long-term study from Michigan State University (MSU) finds that most college students bounced back emotionally after the COVID-19 pandemic, with improved psychological functioning, less loneliness, and more satisfaction with their lives (*CIDRAP*).

ATLANTA: A senior US public health official called on Americans to get vaccinated against measles as outbreaks continue in multiple states and concerns grow that the country could lose its measles elimination designation. Dr Mehmet Oz, a cardiothoracic surgeon, spoke in support of the measles vaccine. “Take the vaccine, please,” said Oz, the administrator of CMS. “We have a solution for our problem” (*The Guardian*).

AMERICA: Polls from the Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease and Research! America found strong support for vaccines and scientific and technologic advancement, regardless of political stripe, with 90% and 91% of Americans saying policymakers must ensure access to vaccines and cement the country’s global leadership in medical progress, respectively (*CIDRAP*).

CHICAGO: The American Medical Association (AMA) announced the launch of its own “evidence-based review process” of vaccine safety and efficacy for the next respiratory viral season, an apparent tacit rebuke of the federal government’s current regulations. The AMA’s evaluation process will be conducted in collaboration with the Vaccine Integrity Project at the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) at the University of Minnesota. The review will focus on immunizations for flu, COVID-19 and RSV (*The Hill*).

AMERICA: A new study by federal and state health researchers indicates invasive *Escherichia coli* infections are a growing problem in the U.S. and becoming harder to treat. The study, by CDC scientists and state and local public health departments found an estimated annual incidence rate of more than 74 extraintestinal invasive E coli infections per 100,000 population, with UTIs accounting for more than half (*JAMA Network Open*).

WASHINGTON, D.C: Six years after COVID-19 upended the world, the feds and private analyses have unearthed hundreds of billions of dollars worth of potential fraud stemming from pandemic relief measures. The Small Business Administration, for example, found last year that it had disbursed up to \$200 billion in “potentially fraudulent loans” across its pandemic relief programs (*The NY Post*).

ATLANTA: Ralph Abraham, MD, abruptly resigned his role as principal deputy director at CDC this week after less than two months on the job. That leaves the agency with vacancies in its top two positions. Acting CDC director Jim O’Neil stepped down just over a week ago. Abraham, a long-time critic of COVID-19 vaccines, also faced sharp criticism in his previous role as surgeon general of Louisiana (*CIDRAP*).

AMERICA: Analyzing data from more than 1 million US patients diagnosed as having invasive cancer in 2020 and 2021, a team led by researchers from the University of Kentucky looked at the patients’ 1-year cause-specific survival rates and compared them with those of cancer patients diagnosed from 2015 to 2019. Patients diagnosed as having cancer in the United States in 2020 and 2021 had significantly worse short-term survival than those diagnosed before the COVID-19 pandemic (*JAMA Oncology*).

COVID-19 03/05/2026

World Total Cases
779,142,314

World Total Deaths
7,111,892

U.S. Total Deaths
1,235,505

World Health Organization

Vax Better Than Expected WHO Still Wants Changes

The World Health Organization (WHO) is recommending that vaccine manufacturers completely change the three viral strains included in the vaccines for the Northern Hemisphere's next influenza season.

As expected, the WHO recommended that vaccines for the next flu season includes a new variant of the influenza virus that started to increase last fall—too late for it to be included in this winter's flu vaccines.

Using current vaccine manufacturing technology, companies need at least six months' prep time to produce flu shots in time for immunization campaigns beginning in the late summer or early fall.

McKnight's, 03/03/2026

NY Lawmakers Seek Hundred\$ of Million\$ for SNF\$

Some NY state lawmakers are advocating \$750 million to be directed toward nursing homes and hospitals, saying that while 70% of SNF residents are on Medicaid it does not cover the daily cost.

From 2007 to 2024, the cost of nursing home care rose by 51%, while the reimbursement rate increased by only 12.8%.

Hospitals are also feeling the effects. ERs are backed up due to a lack of available nursing home beds for patient transfers.

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WHEC-TV, 02/27/2026

Journey's Journey Has Been Fast, Short and Effective

After officially taking over operations at two more facilities last week skilled nursing provider Journey has completed a whirlwind 15 months in which it nearly doubled in size.

A sweep through Georgia that included onboarding 13 nursing homes in February brings the two-year-old organization to 39 facilities, many of them operating at or near capacity.

The nine buildings Journey already held there were 95% occupied and using no agency staff before venturing into new deals.

The company has also boosted wages for some entry-level positions by about \$2 per hour and offers distinctive benefits.

McKnight's, 03/01/2026

They Still Won't Need To Shop at Goodwill

Among 47 large long-term care organizations, executives pocketed raises averaging 3.36% in 2025, representing a continued cooling off period over the last three years.

The base salaries for top executives ranged from \$181,125 in organizations with revenue up to \$49.9 million, to \$311,000 for those with revenue between \$50 million and \$199.9 million, to \$465,838 for those with revenue over \$200 million.

The average maximum for CEOs hit \$606,535.

The size of raises, however, continued to moderate downward, falling from 3.69% in 2023 and 3.52% in 2024.

*Hospital & Healthcare
Compensation Service, March 2026*

SNF Files Suit vs HHS-OIG To Save \$31 Million

A nursing home found to have erred in 99 of 100 reimbursement submissions during the pandemic is fighting back against those findings — and an attempt by regulators to extrapolate the audit results and claw back \$31 million in Medicare payments.

Providers and payment experts were shocked in November when the HHS-OIG accused Pinnacle Multicare of a 99% error rate across all claims submitted over a two-year period.

The nursing home itself said that auditors had confused payment and medical coding requirements and overlooked key COVID-era waivers regarding skilled services.

McKnight's, 03/03/2026

ONE COLUMN

Since Kennedy, American Public Not Positive on CDC

Public trust in the CDC remains near its lowest point since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Six years ago, 85% of Americans, and 90% of Republicans, trusted the CDC. Today less than half trust the CDC on vaccines.

Now in a KFF Tracking Poll, less than half of adults (47%) say they have a "great deal" or "fair amount" of trust in the CDC to provide reliable vaccine information.

Trust among Democrats has fallen 9 percentage points since September 2025 (from 64% to 55%), which is down significantly from 88% in September 2023.

Among Republicans, trust in the CDC as a source of reliable vaccine information is 43%; among independents, it's 46%. Those figures are largely unchanged from September 2025.

Most adults (56%) say they have "little" to "no confidence" in federal health agencies to make recommendations for childhood vaccines, with three in 10 respondents (29%) saying they have no confidence "at all."

Lack of confidence in federal health guidance isn't limited to childhood vaccines. Less than half of US adults (46%) have at least "some" confidence in federal health agencies' ability to guarantee the safety and effectiveness of vaccines approved for use in the United States.

Only 38% believe federal health agencies make decisions based on science rather than personal beliefs, and just 34% think federal officials make decisions without interference from outside interests.

About half of adults say they have heard "a lot" (14%) or "some" (38%) about the changes to the childhood vaccine schedule.

Among those who are aware of the changes, 54% say they will have a negative impact on children's health, compared with 26% who say the impact will be positive.

KFF Health News, 02/06/2026

12 Dead After Nursing Home Collapses in Brazil

In the early hours of Thursday, March 5 at around 1:30 a.m. local time, the Casa de Repouso Pró-Vida nursing home in Belo Horizonte, Brazil collapsed, trapping residents underneath the rubble.

There were reportedly 29 people in the building when it collapsed. Twelve people died including two women, 99 and 96 years old. Eight people were found alive and nine people managed to get out of the building by themselves.

The collapsed building also housed a gym and a tanning salon. The cause of the collapse is yet to be determined.

People Magazine, 03/06/2026

Bankrupt Genesis Honchos Want \$10M in Bonuses

Genesis HealthCare is asking a federal court for permission to pay nearly \$10 million in executive and employee performance incentives in the remaining weeks of its bankruptcy proceedings.

Genesis said it needed to seek additional payments for some senior leaders and a revised key employee retention plan because the bankruptcy process had stretched beyond the six months originally anticipated.

An earlier court order allowed 358 critical "non-insider employees" to earn up to \$8.4 million in total incentives, but they've had to wait until the sale's completion to earn the final 50%.

McKnight's, 03/05/2026

NLRB Finds for Union Over Nursing Home

A reorganized National Labor Relations Board has confirmed that a nursing home violated federal law by blocking union representatives from entering a New York nursing home and calling the police on labor representatives.

The ruling orders Rosewood Rehabilitation to engage in negotiations with 1199 SEIU, pay back wages to an employee fired for his union involvement and rescind changes to terms and

conditions of employment that it enacted in 2022.

The ruling is one of the first involving a nursing home since the board restarted decision-making after a previous lack of quorum muted it for nine months.

McKnight's, 03/05/2026

Tenn. Bill Takes Aim at Pharmacy Benefit Managers

About 18,000 nursing home and assisted living residents served by Omnicare in Tennessee could lose access to their long-term care pharmacy if the state legislature passes a bill targeting pharmacy ownership or control by pharmacy benefits managers.

CVS Health warns that Omnicare's long-term care pharmacies in Nashville, TN, and Cleveland, TN, provide pharmacy services for the residents at 87 senior living and care settings.

CVS says the legislation would do the opposite of its stated claim — that rather than reducing costs, it would result in the closure of 134 pharmacy locations and result in 2,000 CVS employees losing their jobs.

Senior Living, 03/03/2026

Homecare Owner Admits To Over \$200,000 Fraud

The owner of a home healthcare company, Natavia Boyd-Wells, 41, pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court in St. Louis to defrauding the Missouri Medicaid Program and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs out of more than \$209,000.

She admitted that while owner of Touch of the Heart Home Health Care she submitted hundreds of fraudulent reimbursement claims.

Boyd-Wells admitted submitting claims for services on dates when the veteran patients were in the hospital and could not possibly have received home healthcare services.

She also submitted claims knowing both that the services were not provided.

DOJ news release, 02/17/2026

Briefly in the News

Novartis has settled a lawsuit by the estate of Henrietta Lacks that alleged the pharmaceutical giant unjustly profited off her cells, which were taken from her tumor without her knowledge in 1951 and reproduced in labs to enable major medical advancements, including the polio vaccine. The tissue taken from her tumor before she died became the first human cells to continuously grow and reproduce in lab dishes. Details of the agreement, which was finalized in federal court in Maryland in February were not made public (*MedPage Today*).

Under pressure from Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., dozens of American medical schools have agreed to rework their curriculums to teach more about nutrition. Mr. Kennedy, who has made healthy eating a centerpiece of his campaign to address what he calls an epidemic of chronic disease, has spent months pressuring medical schools to adopt his ideas, threatening funding cuts and promising public recognition. The average medical school has been teaching nutrition for two hours. They will now teach 50 hours (*The New York Times*).

The American Security Project, the Obesity Care Advocacy Network, and over 70 national security, military, and public health stakeholders sent an open letter to U.S. Sec. of War Pete Hegseth urging immediate action to address rising rates of obesity in the military. The organizations advocate expanded obesity prevention measures through increased exercise opportunities and improved access to healthy foods, beginning with service-wide reviews of on-base nutrition (*Military.com*).

The head of the FDA plans to start offering bonus payments to agency drug reviewers who complete their work ahead of schedule, the latest in a flurry of changes to longstanding norms and procedures. FDA Commissioner Marty Makary described the effort as a pilot program during a staff presentation Thursday, saying the first quarterly bonus payments would start going out to employees around August (*AP*).