

# IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals  
in 100 Words-or-Less

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Vol 10

03/29/2026

## They said it

**"Nursing homes gave antipsychotic drugs to residents with dementia to manage their behavior for the benefit of staff, despite FDA's warning that these drugs may increase the risk of death"** from a report by the HHS OIG

**"Payment policy should reflect the realities of care delivery and the true costs borne by practitioners"** From letter to CMS from a coalition of nursing home advocates opposed to the cut in physicians pay

**As a result, American seniors are sicker, poorer, and more vulnerable today than they were just a year ago"** Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) criticizing the Trump Administration's programs that the Special Committee on Aging says has put seniors at risk

## **Here's How to Check Out Ownership of a SNF**

The owner of a nursing home can significantly impact the quality of care that home residents receive. CMS said nearly one-fifth of people or companies who report an ownership interest in a nursing home have a financial stake in five or more homes.

Nearly 100 owners have some ownership in 50 or more homes.

To give the public more insight into who owns American nursing homes, ProPublica has added the ability to search by owner, manager or officer name to Nursing Home Inspect, its database that helps find issues that federal inspectors have identified in more than 14,000 facilities.

ProPublica, 03/24/2026

**ProPublica's Nursing Home Inspect:**

<https://projects.propublica.org/nursing-homes/>

## **A CMS Honcho Talks Risk-Based Surveys**

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is set to roll out risk-based surveys on a more broad basis, with final criteria expected to be released in a matter of months.

Evan Shulman, CMS' director of nursing homes said about 10% of skilled nursing facilities in the U.S. would qualify for the risk-based survey.

These surveys are more targeted instead of a full, standard recertification survey.

Qualifying nursing homes likely would have 5-Star ratings and not have failed schizophrenia audits.

Skilled Nursing News, 03/20/2026

## **AL Providers Urge Congress To Support HUD Budget**

In a March 18 letter to House and Senate lawmakers, LeadingAge urged maximum support in fiscal year 2027 for investment in Department of Housing and Urban Development programs for affordable senior housing.

With the oldest baby boomers turning 80 this year, older adults are going to become the key demographic for affordable housing.

The LeadingAge letter stated, "Inadequate funding risks the housing stability of older adult residents of HUD-assisted housing."

The association termed the HUD program as "essential tools" in addressing the country's affordable housing situation

Senior Living, 03/23/2026

## **1-of-3 or the Trumpster May say Nah, Baby, Nah!**

The White House may pick a former governor, a state health director or a cardiologist who has been critical of repeated coronavirus boosters to lead the CDC.

Former Kentucky governor Ernie Fletcher, Mississippi health director Daniel Edney and Johns Hopkins cardiologist Joseph Marine are being considered to lead the nation's preeminent public health agency.

However, Administration officials say their search for a CDC director is not over and President Donald Trump's eventual pick may ultimately be a different choice.

The Washington Post, 3/23/226

## **Researcher 'Stands Pat' Mandates Don't Harm SNFs**

A national study, which found that higher direct care staffing requirements did not hurt SNF finances or increase closures, is receiving pushback from advocates.

The study analyzed data from 2010 through 2023 on 6,849 Medicare- or Medicaid-certified nursing homes across 22 states. Eleven states implemented new or stronger staffing mandates during the study period, while eleven had no mandates.

The study's critics have argued that the study's conclusions are limited because the majority of the 11 states with minimum staffing mandates were in states with large metropolitan areas and easier access to potential staff.

Skilled Nursing News, 03/04/2026

## **Ohio SNFs Saying 'Just Gimme the Dough'**

Nursing homes in Ohio are navigating uncertainty from two directions: the ongoing saga of overdue quality incentive payments and longer-term reimbursement changes included in state legislation.

These issues come at a time when residents have higher acuity and complex needs.

A complicated situation may become even more so with expected shortfalls from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled in favor of nursing homes. Payments were supposed to be adjusted based on patient complexity, but when reimbursement came, acuity wasn't accounted for.

The exact amount owed is still unknown because the state is still recalculating.

Skilled Nursing News, 03/18/2026

## **IN THE TRENCHES**

### **Vaccines, COVID-19, Flu, Measles & Other Outbreaks Around the Globe**

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**SOUTH CAROLINA:** For the first time in months, South Carolina health officials said a week has gone by with no new **measles** cases in the state, and the state total remains just under 1,000 cases, at 997. Of those cases, 940 were recorded in Spartanburg County, the epicenter of the outbreak. School children ages 5 to 17 represent 456 of the cases in the state, and 931 cases occurred in unvaccinated people. Twenty-five were fully vaccinated, 21 were partially vaccinated, and 20 have unknown status (**CIDRAP**).

**WASHINGTON state:** Last fall, Washington and other Western states issued their own vaccine recommendations in a sharp rejection of federal policy that Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has upended. Last week, the Washington Legislature passed legislation to change state law so that **vaccine** coverage is tied to recommendations from the state, not a federal panel filled with Kennedy appointees. It requires insurers to follow the state's guidelines instead of the ones from the feds that Democrats say can no longer be trusted (**Washington State Standard**).

**AMERICA:** Fourteen more influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to the CDC bringing the season total of reported influenza-associated children's deaths to 115. Among those, approximately 85% of reported pediatric deaths this season have occurred in children who were not fully vaccinated against influenza (**CDC FluView**).

**CALIFORNIA:** Public health officials in Placer County say their first confirmed **measles** cases of the year are possibly linked to the large outbreak happening all the way across the country in South Carolina. They have confirmed three measles cases, all teenagers linked to one family. Officials also suspect a fourth family member has measles, but that case has not been confirmed (**CBS News**).

**THE WORLD: COVID-19** infection is a significant predictor of chronic kidney disease (CKD), acute kidney injury (AKI), end-stage renal disease (ESRD), and kidney failure, suggests a study by Penn State researchers published in Communications Medicine. The study found that COVID survivors were nearly five times more at risk for kidney failure (**CIDRAP**).

**AMERICA:** More than half of people in a cross-sectional study reporting on post-COVID condition (PCC) symptoms, or long **COVID**, in 2021 said their ability to work was poor, yet most were still working, suggesting a substantial burden of "presenteeism," or reduced productivity while on the job (**CIDRAP**).

**AMERICA:** The American College of Physicians (ACP) recommends adults age 75 and older receive one dose of respiratory syncytial virus **RSV** vaccine, according to a statement yesterday. In its guidelines, published in Annals of Internal Medicine, the ACP said that adults age 60 to 74 may consider receiving an RSV vaccine if they have medical conditions that increase their risk of serious disease (**CIDRAP**).

**NORTH DAKOTA & COLORADO:** Two new cases of **measles** were confirmed in North Dakota bringing the total to 23 for the year so far. The two new cases are in Traill and Pembina counties, which both border Minnesota (**Minn. Public Radio**). Public health disease-trackers have identified four more cases of measles in an outbreak linked to two schools in Broomfield, Colorado. The newly announced infections all involve unvaccinated children (**The Colorado Sun**).

**NEW ZEALAND:** Public health experts say New Zealand is in its ninth wave of **COVID-19**. The latest figures show 50 hospitalizations and 19 deaths with the virus in the past week. With booster uptake falling and little tracking of long Covid, experts are warning the real impact of the virus may still be underestimated. In the past four years, there had been roughly two waves per year (**RNZ**).

**THE WORLD:** Nigeria reported four cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 with paralysis onset from

January 1 to February 2, bringing the country's total this year to seven cases. Chad reported one type 2 case. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative also noted that while an escalating conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan has not directly limited **polio** eradication programs in those countries, the situation is being closely monitored (**CIDRAP**).

**SUDAN:** Ministry of Health has declared the nation's 18-month **cholera** outbreak over, according to media reports. The country recorded more than 100,000 cases of the acute diarrheal infection from July 2024 through December 2025, with an estimated 2,408 deaths, but no cholera cases have been reported since January 14 (**CIDRAP**).

**TEXAS:** At least 136 **measles** have been reported in Texas this year. The largest concentration — 99 cases — is in a single federal detention facility in Hudspeth County. The facility has previously housed immigrant detainees, though it's not clear if it still does. However, 14 cases were at Camp East Montana, the nation's largest immigration detention facility. Also, two cases of tuberculosis and 18 cases of COVID-19 were detected at a troubled El Paso ICE detention tent camp (**Texas Tribune**).

**AMERICA:** Citing a survey called "Killer Jab?" which found that nearly one out of four Americans reported knowing someone who died from a **COVID** vaccine, a federal work group is calling for sweeping changes to how the medical establishment tracks and treats injuries from the shots. The report was drafted for the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, a panel that advises the government on vaccine policy (**The New York Times**).

#### **COVID-19, 03/19/2026**

**World Total Cases**  
779,174,317

**World Total Deaths**  
7,112,772

**U.S. Total Deaths**  
1,236,232

World Health Organization

## **Dems Blast Mandate Repeal And Other Gov't "Harms"**

The Senate Special Committee on Aging cited repeal of the federal minimum staffing rule is one of eight "harms" that have put seniors "at risk" under the Trump administration.

The report, commissioned by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) is highly partisan and highlights six bills she endorsed, focusing on everything from preventing scams targeting seniors to supporting states' strategic plans for aging.

Gillibrand also targeted the administration for "letting nursing homes off the hook," giving added voice to the New York Times' allegations that the sector's \$4.8 million in donations to Trump led to the staffing rule repeal.

*McKnight's, 03/25/2026*

## **SAVE America Act Adds Difficulty to Resident Voting**

The legislation will require individuals to present documentary proof of U.S. citizenship (such as a birth certificate, passport, or naturalization papers) before registering to vote in federal elections.

This means if someone changes their address, including when moving into a long-term care facility, they would be required to provide a birth certificate, passport, or naturalization papers before registering to vote in federal elections – documents that are often hard to come by for nursing home residents.

Requiring such paperwork would effectively disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of older adults and people with disabilities living in long-term care or receiving care at home.

*Consumer Voice, 03/16/2026*

## **Alaska Doc and Hubby Sentenced for Fraud**

An Anchorage doctor Dr. Claribel Tan, 61, and her husband, Daniel Tan, 70, were sentenced for executing a \$12.5 million health care fraud scheme and evading over \$4 million in taxes on the profits of that 15-year scheme.

Mrs. Tan received 6 ½ years in prison. Her husband and co-defendant were

sentenced to three years of probation, with two years to be served in home confinement.

From 2009 through 2024, Claribel Tan routinely injected patients with free samples, expired medications and medications other than those prescribed. then fraudulently billed health insurance plans for reimbursement of medications they did not purchase.

*DOJ, 03/18/2026*

## **VA Employee Shot to Death in Ga. Clinic Where He Worked**

An employee of the VA clinic in Jasper, Georgia was shot and killed March 17 in the clinic.

Nicholas "Nic" Crews, 34, a social work case manager at the clinic. He was a husband and father of two, expecting his third child in about six weeks.

The Georgia Bureau of Investigations said Charles Michels, 51, of Jasper, Georgia was at the clinic for a walk-in mental health consultation.

After shooting Crews, Michaels exchanged gunfire with police.

He died at the scene.

*Military.com, 03/22/2026*

## **Isolation, Money Woes Tied to Lower Use of Preventive Care**

Social and physical isolation, along with financial hardship, are linked to lower uptake of preventive health services.

Investigators at Cambridge Health Alliance and Harvard Medical School found that a lack of social connections has been linked to higher all-cause death rates, adverse cardiovascular outcomes, hypertension, complications of diabetes, depression and suicide.

Social isolation was tied to lower use of breast cancer and colorectal cancer screenings; physical isolation was linked to reduced uptake of flu vaccination.

Taxi vouchers, mobile vans, or other transportation services are interventions that may improve preventive care uptake among physically isolated and financially deficient individuals.

*Annals of Family Medicine, 03/23/2026*

## **ONE COLUMN**

### **Proposed Congressional Law Would Forbid Medicare in Private Equity SNFs**

The more than 400 nursing homes and hospitals currently owned and operated by private equity firms would be denied Medicare funding under a bill proposed Monday in both the US House and Senate.

It is one of the most aggressive anti-PE moves yet by lawmakers, some of whom have become increasingly bold in attempting to rein in what they call typically negligent ownership groups.

"After private equity takeovers, hospitals and nursing homes routinely slash services, staffing, and supplies and upcharge patients while degrading the quality of care. ... Elderly patients living in nursing homes owned by private equity face a 11% higher mortality rate," sponsors Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT) and Rep. Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA) said in a joint statement.

"Private equity firms follow a 'buy, strip, flip' playbook to reap short-term profits, and sell off what's left, leaving patients and entire communities to deal with the life-or-death consequences," they added.

Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) co-sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

Nursing home association representatives have long said criticism of private equity investors is misguided.

"The reality is that nursing homes are extremely diverse and are often run by small, independent operators. Meanwhile, only 5% of nursing homes are run by private equity firms and PE acquisitions have been on the decline for nearly a decade," said Michael Bassett, Senior Vice President, Government Relations for AHCA/NCA.

Cutting off Medicare funding would essentially eliminate the targeted facilities' ability to continue operating in their current capacity.

*McKnight's, 03/23/2026*

## **Say Goodbye to an Old Friend – The Fax Machine**

CMS is moving forward with an interoperability rule that aims to “eliminate” faxing and replace it with universal electronic healthcare claims and documentation exchanges by mid-2028.

The new rule establishes national electronic exchange standards as well as new electronic signature standards.

While it applies to all providers covered by HIPAA including health plans, the new rule could strike fear among the many nursing homes still reliant on faxing or other manual communication methods for referrals and approvals.

A CMS press release said the rule “phases out fax machines [and] snail mail” to save an estimated \$782 million a year.

*McKnight's, 03/23/2026*

## **SNFs Have ‘immediate threat’ Of losing Their Docs**

A coalition of geriatricians and nursing home advocates are raising “serious concern” about a new policy that pays doctors treating skilled nursing patients less than when they care for long-term care patients.

PALMed, the American Geriatrics Society, LeadingAge and AHCA/NCAL called on CMS to reverse new practice expense coding that risks discouraging clinicians from practicing in post-acute settings.

CMS instituted changes that sought to limit expense practices for some doctors. But nursing home advocates argue that cutting pay for nursing home physicians mistake because almost all of them are independent practitioners whose overhead costs are not covered by post-acute facilities.

*McKnight's, 03/23/2026*

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*Annals of Family Medicine, 03/23/2026*

## **SNFs Falsely Cite Residents As Schizo to Sedate Them**

A report from the HHS OIG found that nursing home staff overdiagnoses their dementia patients with schizophrenia so they can prescribe antipsychotics in order to make the patients easier to manage.

The report noted that CMS developed a quality measure that captures the percentage of residents in nursing homes who receive an antipsychotic drug, which factors into a facility's 5-Star rating.

But residents on antipsychotics are not counted toward the CMS quality measure if they have schizophrenia, which gives the facilities an incentive to label such patients as schizophrenic.

*MedPage Today, 03/20/2026*

## **It's Kinda Like Biting The Hand that Feeds You**

Last October, President Donald Trump nominated nursing home owner Benjamin Landa as his next ambassador to Hungary - a country that Trump has endorsed its prime minister for reelection.

Landa is part owner of about 100 nursing homes in eight states. and one of those homes is suing the Trump administration.

The government says Pinnacle Multicare in the Bronx was overpaid \$31.5 million by Medicare and must give the money back.

Pinnacle, owned in part by Landa the Trump nominee for Ambassador, is suing the government to keep the money.

*ProPublica, 03/23/2026*

## **Briefly in the News**

For older adults, a daily multivitamin may slightly slow the aging process, new research suggests. In a randomized study of 958 older adults, those who took a multivitamin daily for two years experienced slowed so-called biological aging by about four months. That is, during the 24 months, they aged only 20 months at a cellular level (**NBC News**).

Michigan lawmakers passed legislation allowing the state to rejoin an interstate compact, preventing thousands of doctors from losing their license to practice in the state (**Michigan Public**).

Robert Malone, an ally of HHS Secretary Kennedy J., is stepping away from the Centers for CDC's vaccine advisory committee following a court ruling that effectively nullified the panel. Malone posted on social media that the decision wouldn't be appealed, which was contradicted by HHS spokesman Andrew Nixon. “After Andrew trashing me with the press, I am done with the CDC and ACIP,” Malone said, “That was the last straw” (**MedPage Today**).

A federal judge on Tuesday sentenced a Bridgeton, Missouri pediatrician to 20 years in prison for prescribing tens of thousands of pills in exchange for sex, explicit photos or cash. Over the course of nearly a decade, Dr. Craig Spiegel, 70, abused at least two dozen women — some of whom were his patients when they were children (**St. Louis Post-Dispatch**).

More than half of older Americans receive their Medicare coverage through Medicare Advantage plans. Now, with an approximately \$3 million grant from the National Institute on Aging, George Mason University health economist Jeah Jung will lead a national study to evaluate whether private Medicare Advantage plans reduce adverse health events and improve functional outcomes (**George Mason University news release**).

Advocate Health plans to start delivering prescriptions, lab samples and home health supplies via drones next year. It is partnering with Zipline, a drone-based delivery company. Advocate said Thursday. Drone deliveries will launch in Charlotte, NC followed by Chicago and Milwaukee (**Modern Healthcare**).