

# IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals  
in 100 Words-or-Less

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## They said it

**"This verdict is justice for her"** Rita Combs-Jordan, daughter of Janis Combs whose death resulted in \$12.5M wrongful death award

**"States should take notice that they cannot require Americans to abandon their religious beliefs in the name of woke gender ideology,"** Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division after DOJ joined a lawsuit by nuns against NY's requiring men and women to be housed together in a hospice facility

**"What ends up happening is you see staff being cut, skimping on training, delays in repairs, supplies, things like that"** Connecticut state Sen. Jan Hochadel on new state law that clamps down on private equity firms owning significant portions of nursing homes

## **Health Spending Projected to Hit Almost \$9 Trillion in '34**

Researchers at CMS say Health expenditures are expected to reach \$8.97 trillion by 2034, while the percentage of the population with health insurance is expected to decline for the next several years.

Health spending growth is projected to average 5.4% [annually] over the projection period and is expected to grow more rapidly than the gross domestic product.

Provisions from the Inflation Reduction Act and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act are anticipated to affect health spending and insurance coverage trends through 2028.

Healthcare's share of the economy will increase from 18.0% in 2024 to 20.6% in 2034.

*Health Affairs, 06/24/2026*

## **SCOTUS Allows Feds to End TPS for Haitians, et al**

Stating federal courts do not have the authority to weigh in on the administration's judgment, the Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision, upheld the Trump administration's efforts to revoke humanitarian protections for roughly 350,000 Haitian and 6,100 Syrian immigrants.

The decision not only affects thousands of direct care workers, but almost certainly ensures major workforce losses in specific geographic areas.

One estimate opines at least 1 million seniors will be affected by the loss of Haitian workers alone.

The decision enables federal officials to expel Haitian and Syrian immigrants in the country under TPS before their legal challenges are complete.

*Senior Living, 06/25/2026*

## **DOL Suing Providers Personally Re: Wage Theft**

A nursing home and its two top leaders are facing a federal lawsuit that accuses them of withholding earned pay from direct care staff — even after a previous warning from the Department of Labor.

DOL filed suit against Superior Manor of Festus (Missouri) seeking back pay and damages for employees over a three-year period and a \$103,000 civil monetary penalty.

The lawsuit targets the 2-star, 55-bed nursing home, its owner and another managerial employee.

DOL said those leaders "repeatedly and willfully violated" the Fair Labor Standards Act when it failed to pay employees for all hours worked and overtime.

*McKnight's, 06/25/2026*

## **Texas Lawsuit Cites OT And Meal Break Issues**

Two nurse managers at Priority Management Group's Royse City Medical Lodge in suburban Dallas are suing the company because their bonuses were not included in overtime calculations.

The plaintiffs are also challenging Priority's past practice of automatically deducting 30-minute meal breaks from each shift.

The nurses intend to make it a class-action suit including all hourly current and former employees who worked for Priority the last three years.

The lawsuit seeks unpaid wages, liquidated damages or interest, and attorneys' fees and costs under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Priority operates 51 facilities in Texas and Louisiana.

*McKnight's, 06/22/2026*

## **New Rules for Private Equity in Connecticut SNFs**

Under a new law investors are not allowed to control the health, care or safety of Connecticut nursing home residents.

Beginning in February 2027, the law requires nursing homes to disclose individuals or groups that have at least a 5% financial stake in the facility, including the names and addresses of investors, ownership shares and the purchasing agreement for the home.

Another component of the new law requires nursing facilities to get a bond or insurance policy to cover at least 90 days of operating costs if investment entities have at least a 5% stake in the business.

*Connecticut Public Radio, 06/08/2026*

## **Experts Pan Kennedy's Vaccine Study Inquiry**

Legal and public health experts expressed concern about HHS Secretary Kennedy's scrutiny of a medical journal's decision to remove a study that purportedly suggested an increased incidence of sudden infant death syndrome a few days after vaccination.

"Secretary Kennedy pretended in the past to support free speech," Dorit Reiss, PhD, a law professor at the University of California San Francisco, said. "Now he is using his position to bully a medical journal, in a way that's reminiscent of the conduct the Supreme Court struck down here. He cites no regulatory authority and has none."

*MedPage Today, 06/16/2026*

## **IN THE TRENCHES**

### **COVID-19, Flu, Measles, Vaccines, & Other Worldwide Outbreaks**

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**EAST COAST:** There are now nine cases of *listeriosis* linked to an ongoing outbreak involving soft ricotta cheese. So far eight people have been hospitalized and one person from Maryland has died from the infection. Three people each have been sickened in New York, Maryland, and Virginia. Of the eight people interviewed, six reported eating soft cheese prior to symptom onset (**CDC**).

**THE WORLD:** The world is not “well prepared” for the next **pandemic**, Tom Frieden, the former head of the CDC said, citing the current response to the Ebola outbreak and cuts to US public health efforts. “This Ebola outbreak is not going to cause a pandemic, it’s not going to cause a significant risk to large numbers of Americans,” Frieden, the CEO of Resolve to Save Lives said on *Bloomberg This Weekend*. (**Bloomberg**).

**AMERICA:** Donald Trump and the World Health Organization are teed up for another clash over infectious disease **travel bans**. Trump ignored the WHO’s advice, and its criticism of travel restrictions early in the pandemic when he closed the U.S. border to foreigners who’d recently been in China and he’s ignoring the U.N. agency again now, at the outset of what is already one of the worst Ebola outbreaks ever, by barring most travelers from the affected countries. (**Politico**).

**ATLANTA:** The FDA’s vaccine advisors voted 8 to 0, with one abstention, in favor of a monovalent XFG vaccine **for COVID-19** shots for the 2026-2027 season. The Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) also discussed the need to target the long-simmering BA.3.2 variant, also known as “cicada,” though most expressed confidence that targeting XFG was the right way to go (**MedPage Today**).

**AMERICA:** Researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported US

surveillance data show a dramatic rise in the incidence of a particularly worrisome form of multidrug-resistant bacteria in hospital patients. Infections caused by carbapenem-resistant Enterobacterales (CRE) are among the superbugs the CDC keeps track of because they are resistant to multiple classes of antibiotics and are a major concern for hospital patients. In 2022, an estimated 13,387 **CRE** infections occurred in US hospital patients (**Emerging Infectious Diseases**).

**AMERICA:** After re-opening an investigation into a **Salmonella** outbreak tied to moringa leaf powder, the CDC has confirmed 22 new cases in four newly affected states and implicated another product. The new cases and states increase the outbreak total to 119 infections in 36 states. The CDC also confirmed six new outbreak-related hospitalizations, bringing hospital cases to 32. No deaths have been reported (**CIDRAP**).

**AMERICA:** An estimated 32 million children in the U.S. live in homes with **firearms**, nearly 7 million of whom have at least one firearm in the household that’s unlocked and loaded. “This study sheds further light on the fact that there are millions of kids living in this country, in households where weapons are readily available and often not locked up,” says Dr. Chethan Sathya, a pediatric surgeon and director of the Center for Gun Violence Prevention at Northwell Health, (**JAMA Network Open**).

**AFRICA:** The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Africa CDC announced a joint plan to respond to the **Ebola** outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda over the next 6 months. The plan aims to raise \$518 million to help African countries and partners to strengthen outbreak response measures through November 2026 and aims to complement response plans already launched by the governments of DRC and Uganda (**CDC Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report**).

**AMERICA:** In a little over five months, the United States has topped 2,000 measles cases, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today confirming 57 new **measles** cases and 2,030 total cases since the start of the

year. Last year the country didn’t cross the 2,000-case mark till around Christmas, and it marked the first time since 1992 that infections reached that mark in a single year. The total for all of last year was 2,288 confirmed cases (KFF Health News).

**AMERICA:** Hundreds of detainees across at least 33 states alleged in federal lawsuits that immigration detention facilities are failing to provide adequate medical care.. Detainees say they didn’t get medications on time -- or at all -- for conditions including high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, epilepsy, Parkinson’s, and HIV. Requests for help went unanswered for weeks (**KFF Health News and the Associated Press**).

**THE WORLD:** As the FDA investigates two new outbreaks of foodborne illness, the World Health Organization (WHO) released global data estimating the annual number of illnesses and deaths tied to unsafe food at 866 million and 1.5 million, respectively. The WHO report also found that, despite children younger than 5 years making up only 9% of the population, that age group represents nearly one third of all cases of foodborne illness – especially deadly diarrheal diseases (**Lancet Global Health**).

**AMERICA:** For many people, the ability to work from home is one of the **COVID-19** pandemic’s most enduring changes. Remote work has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic, rising from roughly 7% of US workers in 2019 to 28% in 2023. But a new study suggests that the shift away from the office may have come with a cost: more time spent alone and poorer mental health (**CIDRAP**).

**AMERICA:** Health officials are trying to raise awareness of a lesser-known tick problem: a life-threatening allergy to meat triggered by **tick bites**. The problem, known as alpha-gal syndrome, was first linked to a particular species of ticks about 15 years ago. But cases are on the rise as more people report symptoms such as hives, diarrhea and itchiness after eating as little as a mouthful of meat and — in some cases — dairy. The allergy doesn’t impact consumption of seafood or poultry. Chicken, turkey and eggs are all OK to eat (**AP**).

## **Staff Dropped Her, Jury Awards \$12.5 Million**

A Butler County, Ohio jury awarded \$12.5 million to the family of Janice Combs, 83, who died after suffering a catastrophic brain injury while receiving care Chesterwood Village.

Her family said she was blind but had been living independently before entering the facility.

The lawsuit alleged staff members dropped Combs while transferring her from a wheelchair to a bed.

The fall was not documented.

Paramedics discovered an injury to the back of Combs' head. She was taken to a hospital, where doctors diagnosed a severe brain bleed. She remained on a ventilator and died nearly 10 months later.

WKRC-TV, 06/16/2026

## **Can't Use MDPOA to Bind Residents to Arbitration**

A woman in Colorado had signed a medical DPOA naming her daughter as agent.

Nearly a decade later, the woman was admitted to a nursing home with her daughter completing the paperwork including an arbitration agreement.

About a month after admission, the resident suffered two falls within roughly forty-eight hours and passed away days later.

The family sued for negligence and wrongful death. The facility attempted to compel arbitration.

A trial court denied the facility's motion saying to bind the resident to arbitration, the MDPOA must expressly grant the agent that specific authority. The court of appeals agreed.

Gordon Rees Skully Mansukhani, 6/2026

## **Flood Threat Forces Nursing Home Evacuation**

Fifty-seven residents were evacuated from a nursing home in Palmetto in Central and South Louisiana.

Tri-Community Nursing Home evacuated all residents in preparation for flooding in St. Landry Parish as water begins to drain from parts of Central Louisiana. A nearby parish (county) received 20 inches of rain during the week.

It appears officials at Tri-Community Nursing Home were proactive and did not wait for a mandatory evacuation. The residents were moved to a facility in Iberville Parish.

A portion of Central Louisiana received a record amount of rainfall as Tropical Storm Arthur swept across the state this week.

KLFY-TV, 06/18/2026

## **Bill May Divert Folks From Home Care to SNFs**

Ohio's newly passed Medicaid oversight bill could drive more patients into skilled nursing facilities, with disability advocates warning that new requirements for home care providers may reduce access to community-based services.

The legislation follows concerns about Medicaid fraud in Ohio's home care system, which prompted Gov. Mike DeWine to impose a six-month moratorium on new home care providers and support additional oversight measures aimed at curbing abuse.

The tighter eligibility and provider requirements, combined with the moratorium could make it harder for individuals with complex care needs to maintain services in the community.

Skilled Nursing News, 06/12/2026

## **Insulin Cost Cap Gets Another Look in Congress**

A Senate plan to limit insulin costs in private insurance markets is getting new life after a key committee gave it bipartisan backing.

Capping out-of-pocket insulin costs at \$35 per month for patients with diabetes in commercial insurance has been a goal for years.

The Senate measure, which would extend the cap to people on private insurance and create a pilot program for uninsured people in 10 states, got a bipartisan 15-8 vote in the Senate Health Committee last week.

Axios, 06/24/2026

## **ONE COLUMN**

### **OIG finds CMS too Lax In Audits of PBJ**

The HHS-OIG is pushing CMS to toughen its audit processes to ensure accuracy of payroll-based staffing data collected from nursing homes.

For its part, the OIG pointed to CMS' last publicly advising on PBJ error trends in 2018, despite several new reporting requirements added since then.

But CMS had spotted other patterns, telling auditors that nursing homes' failure to deduct meal breaks from hours reported was the most common finding for audits performed in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

That issue also was a top concern in the OIG audit, with 18 nurses' hours not reflecting meal break deductions.

Overall, between 39% and 55% of nursing homes audited during that timeframe had negative findings.

a sample of 100 RNs, found 45 instances of unsupported reporting, ranging from an underreporting of 60 hours in one sample to an overreporting of 192.5 hours in another. But the audit did not find significant proof of over-inflated staffing hours.

The 45 unsupported data points added up to just 748.5 hours reported. The total unsupported hours equaled 1,084.5 out of 17,700 total RN hours clocked in the audit period.

The idea that audits could increase or require more follow-up would be concerning to providers, who have argued that failed audits' effects on star ratings are especially egregious at a time when federal staffing ratings can influence state payments. Audits also can suppress scores on Care Compare and influence consumer choice.

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HHS-OIG news release, 06/18/2026

## **Fake Degrees -Three More Nurses Disciplined**

The Connecticut Board of Nursing Examiners revoked the licenses of two nurses and suspend the license of a third based on their involvement in a fake degree scheme that sparked a national investigation.

At a hearing it was determined Albertha Dafinice and Peggy Kayumba had not completed the hours required for a nursing degree and there was no record of them being in Florida when they said they attended nursing schools there.

The board also suspended the license of Maria Edourdvalmir pending a hearing. on whether she had properly obtained required hours while attending the Florida schools.

*Greenwich Time, 06/08/2026*

## **Pleads Guilty in Fake Nursing Diploma Scam**

Following a two-week trial in Fort Lauderdale, a South Florida nursing school owner and operator, Carleen Noreus, pleaded guilty for her role in a scheme that sold fraudulent nursing diplomas and transcripts to individuals seeking nursing licenses.

Noreus conspired with others to sell fraudulent nursing diplomas and educational transcripts to individuals who had not completed the required coursework or clinical training to earn nursing degrees.

Of the 2956 individuals who obtained fraudulent credentials from the school, approximately 2,274 passed nursing board examinations

*DOJ news release, 06/18/2026*

## **Hundreds of Docs, Other Clinicians File to Unionize**

More than 240 physicians and advanced practice providers from dozens of Banner Health locations throughout the Phoenix area have filed to unionize.

The effort comes as clinicians have expressed concerns about patient panel sizes, staffing levels, and scheduling practices, which have gone unaddressed, leaving them "worried about patient

safety, continuity of care, and increasing administrative burdens."

Concerns were amplified when physician Syerra Lea, DO, said she was disciplined after flagging a scheduling error that could have led to hundreds of patients arriving for appointments with clinicians who were not scheduled to be on duty.

*MedPage Today, 06/23/2026*

## **Mental Health Assistants Help Reduce Psych Meds**

In Manhattan, the 815-bed NYC Health + Hospitals/Coler SNF has 90% of its residents with behavioral health diagnosis.

Although it cares for a high proportion of residents with long-diagnosed schizophrenia and other challenging diagnoses, Coler's use of antipsychotics is at about just 7% - roughly half the US average.

The program has contributed to reducing antipsychotic use, the need for costly 1-to-1 supervision and hospitalizations.

That's partially due to the use of "mental health assistants" who get drinks for residents, take them on walks, set up calls to family and deescalated outbreaks and a myriad of tasks that free up clinicians.

*McKnight's, 06/22/2026*

## **The Happiest State for Retirees May Surprise You**

From a survey by the Legacy Healing Center the happiest place in the country for retirees is New Jersey.

The state has the lowest senior suicide rate in the country and the lowest prevalence of senior depression at 10%.

"New research suggests the happiest retirement years may depend more on mental health, life expectancy, social connection and whether older adults have access to support in their communities."

After NJ the Top Ten in order are: Connecticut, South Dakota, Nebraska, Massachusetts, Delaware. New York, California and Utah.

West Virginia ranked last with the highest senior depression rate

*People Magazine, 06/20/2026*

## **Briefly in the News**

President Trump announced that more prescription medications would be added to his administration's direct-to-consumer drug platform, TrumpRx, the second expansion of the initiative in as many months. "I am pleased to announce that TrumpRx.gov is adding another 160 Prescription Drugs, at highly discounted prices, for a new total of over 800 of the most commonly-used Prescription Drugs," Trump wrote on Truth Social (**The Hill**).

Nursing home staffing levels have mostly bounced back to pre-pandemic levels after cratering during the health emergency. Staffing rose from 3.3 million in January 2016 to 3.49 million in May 2026. It fell to about 2.97 million in November 2021, then climbed steadily through 2026 (**Axios**).

A rare but potentially serious disease tied to rabbits and ticks has been detected in northern Colorado, prompting a warning as human risk rises heading into summer. Health officials said tularemia was confirmed in a dead rabbit in Larimer County and is likely present elsewhere. Though human infections are rare, the disease can spread through insect bites, animal contact, and airborne dust, making outdoor precautions critical during peak months (**USA TODAY**).

Male patients with disabilities were significantly less likely to report satisfaction with their nursing home care than their female counterparts. The study examined data on 1,157 participants across seven representative long-term care institutions in first-tier Chinese cities. In the study, males were about 54% less likely to report satisfaction with their care compared to females (**Patient Preference and Adherence**).

Details on the cyber threat against Novo Nordisk are unfolding in reports alleging that two hacker groups attempted to extort the Danish drugmaker out of millions of dollars. The company's systems were separately hacked by the cyberextortion group FulcrumSec and a lesser-known hacking ring known as TheUSERS007. The former demanded \$25 million, the latter \$50 million. Novo did not comply with payment to either group (**Fierce Pharma**).