

IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals
in 100 Words-or-Less

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They said it

"Washington [state] is making history by being the first to launch a public solution to the long-term care crisis"

Washington House Speaker Laurie Jenkins, who authored the 2019 bill that created a public funded, state run LTC system

"Fines are an outdated compliance tool" Doug Farmer, president of the Colorado Health Care Association

"The journal is strongly against the use of human organs or tissues from any individual where appropriate consent has not been obtained" Editors of *Journal of Hepatology* after retracting two Chinese studies regarding transplants

CMS Wants to Eliminate the 3-Day Stay

In its effort to remove inpatient only status from most surgical procedures, CMS said it would eliminate 637 procedures and services from the inpatient-only program as part of its proposed 2027 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment rule.

While named surgeries could still be conducted at a hospital, conducting the vast majority of procedures under outpatient status or in surgery centers would deprive patients of a three-day stay needed to trigger skilled nursing coverage.

CMS previously removed 285 procedures from the IPO list; including many musculoskeletal services that some providers said had traditionally accounted for up to 50% of their admissions.

McKnight's, 07-09-2026

Reconsiders Managed Care For Long-Stay Residents

Michigan is battling back against managed Medicaid organizations that providers say too often slow roll patient authorizations, delay reimbursement and claw back payments made for care already delivered.

Skilled nursing providers in Michigan are hopeful that legislation to return long-stay residents to Fee-for-Service Medicaid — as well as ensure faster claims processing, limit retroactive payment audits and streamline approvals for care — is gathering momentum.

A bill there follows on the heels of successful campaigns in Indiana and Nebraska, which this year carved at least some long-stay residents out of managed care programs run by private insurers.

McKnight's 07/08/2026

Bounce Back – SNF Workforce Back to Pre-Covid Levels

The skilled nursing workforce added 3,000 jobs in June, its highest level – 1.56 million – since February 2020 when the COVID crisis began.

The latest ADP National Employment Report Economy Lab report, issued last week, said that healthcare and education led the US jobs market again in June. The sector was responsible for almost half of the jobs created — 48,000 of 98,000.

Although the milestone "is a testament to the relentless efforts of long-term care providers who have never stopped investing in their people," said AHCA head Clif Porter. Strengthening the workforce "will remain at the forefront for America's nursing homes."

McKnight's Business Daily, 07/06/2026

Court Upholds \$15M Verdict For Staffing, Billing Fraud

A federal appeals court has upheld the conviction of two Pittsburgh-area nursing homes accused of defrauding Medicare and Medicaid by manipulating staffing records and overbilling.

The Court ruled against Mount Lebanon Rehab and Brighton Rehab.

which in 2023 were convicted of healthcare fraud and falsification of records,

Both facilities, owned by Comprehensive Healthcare Management Services, were ordered to pay more than \$15 million in restitution.

Five other Comprehensive facilities and company leaders also were tried for their alleged roles in the scheme but found not guilty.

McKnight's, 07/09/2026

Urged to Monitor for Assisted Suicide Bias

A bipartisan group of lawmakers is urging Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to set up new monitoring rules for hospices to root out discrimination against vulnerable populations in the provision of medically assisted suicide.

In a letter sent to Kennedy, Sens. James Lankford (R-Okla.) and Tim Kaine (D-Va.) and Reps. Greg Murphy (R-N.C.) and Luis Correa (D-Calif.) recommended that HHS establish reporting requirements in the hospice program to better monitor the provision of medically assisted suicide.

The four are concerned about discrimination against people with disabilities, older adults and other vulnerable populations.

The Hill, 07/09/2026

SNFs Beware – *C. auris* is On the Rise in the U.S.

A potentially deadly type of fungus that is almost untreatable continues to pose severe threats to healthcare facilities across the U.S.

Candida auris, or *C. auris*, is a yeast that colonizes on the skin and is difficult to get rid of. From 2022 to 2024 about 13,500 cases were reported to the CDC, mostly in men over 45 in nursing homes or hospitals. About 30% of the infected people died.

Healthy people typically are asymptomatic, but those with compromised immune systems or coping with other illnesses such as people in nursing homes and hospitals, are at high risk of infection.

NBC News, 07/06/2026

IN THE TRENCHES

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

AMERICA: More than 400 people across 18 states have been infected with cyclospora, a parasite that is transmitted through food and water contaminated with feces and causes stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting and severe diarrhea. At least 20 people have been hospitalized, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and no deaths have been reported. New York, Texas, Illinois and Michigan have the most cases so far, according to the C.D.C. and state health officials (*The New York Times*).

ILLINOIS: More than 6,400 Illinois residents were diagnosed as having a tick-borne disease from 2004 to 2022, with cases occurring in every county in the state and in every month of the year. That number represents dramatic growth in human cases of tick-borne diseases during that time and reflects the urgency of prevention efforts, according to a new study in Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases (*CIDRAP*).

CONGO: New suspected cases of Ebola have been reported in parts of Congo that were previously unaffected, as the death toll in the country's latest Ebola outbreak reached 600. The Congolese health ministry, suspected cases have now been recorded in two more provinces signaling the continued spread of the disease beyond the epicenter in Ituri (*AP*).

NEW ENGLAND: A blood parasite spread by deer ticks is on the rise across New England, and most of the existing treatments don't work well in people who are immuno-compromised. But a researcher at the University of Vermont has isolated a few drugs he thinks could change that, and this summer secured a \$150,000 grant from the Bay Area Lyme Foundation to test them in mice, in hopes of developing the first-ever therapy created specifically to treat the condition babesiosis (*Vermont Public*).

AMERICA: Far more people may be at risk for alpha-gal syndrome, the tick-

borne illness that triggers an allergy to red meat, than previously thought. Nearly a quarter of adults in five states – Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee and Virginia – where lone star ticks are prevalent are estimated to show signs that they've been bitten, according to new research published Thursday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (*NBC News*).

CALIFORNIA: A Princess Cruises cruise ship docked in San Francisco has seen an outbreak of norovirus. The CDC said that 102 out of the over 3,000 passengers onboard the Ruby Princess have been affected, along with 23 crew members. Symptoms for those who have become ill include diarrhea and vomiting (*The Hill*).

THE HIGH SEAS: The World Health Organization announced the outbreak of hantavirus is now over. The reported illnesses initially looked like a typical stomach bug on a luxury ocean liner, but quickly escalated to a fatal outbreak of hantavirus, a rare rodent-borne pathogen, leading to weeklong quarantines for the ship's passengers and a global health alert. Overall, there were 12 confirmed cases and one probable case aboard the cruise ship, including three deaths (*The New York Times*).

NEBRASKA: Quarantine ended on Sunday for American passengers of a cruise ship that was hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak. The passengers had been held for weeks at a federal facility in Nebraska. The quarantine was lifted at 2 p.m. Central time, officials said. It marked a return to day-to-day life for all 18 passengers, including the six who had stayed at the National Quarantine Unit at the University of Nebraska Medical Center until the end of the 42-day period. Since the end of May, 12 had been released from the unit to home confinement (*The New York Times*).

CONGO: As cases and deaths in the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) continue to climb, the WHO said the first patient has been treated in a clinical trial for two antiviral therapies. The trial will evaluate whether the monoclonal antibody MBP134 and the antiviral drug *remdesivir*, alone or in combination, can improve

survival in patients of any age with Ebola, which so far has no licensed therapeutics or vaccines (*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*).

THE WORLD: Americans are clearly drinking less these days, with alcohol consumption thwarted by a health-obsessed generation, weight-loss drugs and the growing popularity of cannabis. Alcohol volume was down 2% in the world's major alcohol markets last year, though a much steeper drop of 5% was recorded in the US. (*Bloomsburg*).

MOUNTAIN WEST: The Refinery Risk Map, developed by researchers at PSE Healthy Energy and academic partners, combines emissions data, air pollution modeling and health impact estimates for nearly every oil refinery in the contiguous United States. The tool includes Mountain West refineries in Utah, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico (*KUNR Public Radio*).

CONGO: Faced with a combative crowd demanding to see the body about to be buried in the trading hub of Bunia, the Red Cross team proposed a compromise borne from past Ebola outbreaks: They offered to open the coffin as long as onlookers brought protection to avoid infection. The rejection was swift. The crowd in this war-torn part of eastern Congo assaulted the volunteers, seriously injuring two of them, and opened the coffin, unwittingly exposing themselves to the virus at its most contagious (*Bloomberg*).

“You know you're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you're down there.”
– George Burns

Transplant Studies Retracted Over Harvesting Concerns

Two Chinese studies related to liver transplantation published more than a decade ago in the *Journal of Hepatology* were retracted by the journal's editors.

The editors said concerns were raised that the transplants may have involved organs "procured unethically."

The editors said they had asked the study's authors to: Provide evidence of ethical approval from an appropriate Institutional Review Board that pre-dated the start of the research.

The researchers must also provide evidence of the source of donor organs and confirmation that they were obtained with informed consent and not from executed prisoners or trafficked individuals.

MedPage Today, 07/09/2026

White House Grant Proposal Generates 99K comments

The Trump administration's proposed overhaul of federal grant-making has drawn nearly 99,000 public comments, with the July 13 deadline to submit comments now days away.

The Office of Management and Budget's proposal, published in the Federal Register on May 29, would update how the federal government awards and manages grants across more than 40 agencies, including HHS, the National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation.

The proposal includes more than 320 changes to the government's existing grant guidance, according to the Association of American Universities.

Becker's Hospital Review, 07/09/2026

Bill Codifies HCBS Rights For People with Disabilities

A new Congressional proposal would protect and expand the rights of people with disabilities to receive long-term services and supports in assisted living communities and other settings of their choice.

The goal, according to its sponsors, is to make LTSS access a federally protected right, assuring people with disabilities are not forced into nursing homes and other institutional settings when they could be served in less restrictive locations.

The bill would require states and insurers to provide access to LTSS through home- and community-based services and create transition plans for those moving from institutional care back into the community.

Senior Living, 07/08/2026

Colorado: Cites & Fines up - Providers Say Not Logical

Colorado nursing homes are seeing more citations and complaints. The number of formal complaints reached an all-time high of 7,426 in fiscal 2025.

CMS data revealed that 40% of Colorado nursing homes had severe deficiencies in 2025 - the fifth highest rate in the nation - up from just 14% in 2019.

And Colorado's nursing home CMP account now holds nearly \$20 million.

Doug Farmer CEO of Colorado Health Care Association believes fine are irrational, "If they need more staff or to increase staff training, taking money from them is contrary to that goal."

Skilled Nursing News, 07/06/2026

CMS Considering Incentives For In-House Dialysis

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services wants to know how it can improve dialysis access after a patient leaves the hospital, signaling that it is considering incentive payments for nursing homes that step up with in-house delivery.

The agency tucked a request for information into the 92-page proposed 2027 End-Stage Renal Disease Prospective Payment System rule published June 26.

While experts say more nursing homes than ever are opting into on-site dialysis for their patients, the RFI reveals CMS' heightened interest in dialysis patient retention at the SNF level and links that to possible new rules and reimbursement.

McKnight's, 07/06/2026

ONE COLUMN

Americans Worried About Paying for Healthcare

The West Health-Gallup Affordability Index, indicates only about half of U.S. adults could afford their healthcare and had access to quality care last year. Concerns about affording healthcare in the year ahead were at a record high since tracking began in 2021.

The new findings draw on a survey conducted from October to December 2025 -- before major recent changes to health policy, like Congress' Medicaid cuts or its decision not to extend Affordable Care Act subsidies, took effect.

It demonstrates how the country's fraught healthcare system is increasingly straining Americans at a time when inflation is driving high costs and affordability concerns are top of mind as midterm elections approach.

The index placed Americans into three categories depending on their access to quality care and ability to pay for care and medicine. In the new data, 49% of U.S. adults were considered "cost secure," meaning that they had access both to high-quality, affordable care and they had recently been able to afford the care and medicine they needed.

In 2021, when the measurement began, 56% of U.S. adults were "cost secure." In 2022 it was 61% but has been falling ever since.

In the survey, about three-quarters of U.S. adults said healthcare costs were a "major" or "minor" financial burden for them and their family.

Only about 3 in 10 said they're not a burden.

Meanwhile, about half of respondents were "extremely concerned" or "concerned" that their household would be unable to pay for needed healthcare services in 2026, up from 42% who said that in 2022.

More than half of survey respondents said the cost of healthcare contributes "a lot" or "some" to stress to their daily lives.

MedPage Today, 06/18/2026

Colorado Revisiting Minimum Staffing Standards

Current regulations require at least two hours of nursing care PPD, but regulators are considering increasing the minimum to three hours.

The discussions on staffing reform are focused on whether the current two-hour minimum remains appropriate given resident needs and the financial realities facing providers.

Industry groups oppose the change, arguing the state should avoid imposing standards providers cannot afford.

Resident advocates contend the current minimum contributes to chronic understaffing and poor outcomes.

The debate comes as the state's long-term care system contracts. Since January 2023, Colorado has lost 10 nursing homes.

Skilled Nursing News, 07/06/2026

Illinois ALFs Approved For Granny Cams

Residents of assisted living and shared housing facilities in Illinois will soon have the option to install electronic monitoring devices in their rooms.

Governor J.B. Pritzker approved the measure, extending protections that have existed for nursing home residents since 2016.

Cameras or audio recording devices must be installed in a visible location. Signs must be posted outside monitored rooms.

If a resident shares a room, the roommate must consent to the recording.

State officials say the law gives residents and their families another tool to help monitor care, improve transparency, and provide added peace of mind while remaining completely optional.

WSIU-FM, NPR, 07/10/2026

A P.R. Drought and a Call to Prioritize LTC

With various towns in Puerto Rico facing a serious drought and water rationing, Jonathan Morales Adorno president of the

island's LTC association called for a quick response from the island's government to guarantee the supply of potable water to the nearly 1,500 licensed LTC homes.

The association president questioned why, in the midst of the crisis, instead of offering urgent and ongoing assistance, the Family Department's Licensing Office sent a communication July 6 reminding LTC homes to comply with the law.

It also announced inspection visits.

San Juan Star, 07/08/2026

Steep Drop in Affordable Care Act a/k/a Obamacare

In newly released federal data Obamacare has lost a lot of traction.

The information provides the first complete 50-state breakdown of sharp enrollment declines following the January expiration of enhanced subsidies.

States across the country saw steep drops in the number of people covered by the Affordable Care Act over the past year, with Ohio and Oklahoma each losing nearly one-third of its enrollees.

The data, posted in June by the Trump administration, reveals how changes in each state's insured population led to around 2.6 million fewer Americans having Obamacare plans in February compared with the same time last year.

AP, 07/0/2026

New Laws Affecting Long-Term Care in Arizona

Under bills recently adopted in Arizona, assisted living communities are expected to see faster payments and provide a statement of residents' rights in their discharge or eviction notices.

Provisions in the new laws also mandate insurance for assisted living referral agencies and require them to meet disclosure and insurance requirements.

One bill outlines change of ownership procedures for licensed assisted living communities and skilled nursing facilities through the Arizona Long-Term Care System, providing in-home and community-based services to financially and medically eligible Arizona residents requiring a nursing facility level of care.

Senior Living, 07/01/2026

Briefly in the News

A word to the wise: In a report, the HHS Office of Inspector General found that some skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) didn't comply with Medicare requirements for reporting related party costs. These SNFs failed to report related parties on their Medicare Cost Reports or reported the costs inaccurately, resulting in overstated costs to the Medicare Program (*CMS.gov*).

A nationwide recall has been issued for a medication used to reduce the risk of hospitalization in patients with heart failure. Nearly 1 million bottles of Corlanor, known generically as *ivabradine*, are being recalled because they may contain a foreign substance. Corlanor is prescribed for adults with chronic heart failure to lower the risk of hospitalization due to worsening conditions. The recall, which affects at least 934,577 bottles containing 5 mg tablets of Corlanor manufactured in Italy, is being voluntarily initiated by Amgen, Inc., the manufacturer of the medication (*The Hill*).

Saber Healthcare Group has added 27 new facilities to its portfolio. The company began acquiring facilities from Michigan-based Ciena Health on June 1, with new buildings in Ohio, Virginia and North Carolina coming online through June 30. The facilities bring 3,000 additional licensed beds to Ohio-based Saber, which has grown from two facilities in 2001 to more than 167 (*McKnight's*).

The cost of Obamacare coverage is due to rise by a median of 14% next year, according to a new analysis, marking further turmoil for the law's marketplaces. It would mark the second straight year of double-digit premium increases in the individual market. Customers could be on the hook for thousands of more dollars in costs, worsening the health affordability crisis (*Axios*).

A prescription refill program that quietly launched in Utah earlier this year has kicked off a big medical debate: Is artificial intelligence ready to take over tasks that, until now, could only be performed by doctors? The program allows Utah residents to skip the doctor's office and get their prescriptions refilled online by an AI chatbot called Doctronic (*AP*).