

IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals
in 100 Words-or-Less

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They said it

"I'm a doctor. This executive order is wrong. The President does not have the expertise to make these changes. Vaccines are overwhelmingly safe" Sen. Bill Cassidy after President Trump signed an executive order that splits the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) shot into three separate visits.

"Every West Virginian deserves access to quality health care close to home, especially our seniors" Gov. Patrick Morrisey at groundbreaking of first new SNF in W. Va in 15 years

"Institutional conspiracy beliefs were widespread and systematically related to media skepticism and distrust toward authorities" from Japanese study examining COVID-19 conspiracy theories

First Challenge for New CDC Director

The first big test for new CDC director, Erica Schwartz, has arrived before her first day on the job.

Schwartz, who has been confirmed but not sworn in, will have to decide how to respond to President Donald Trump's executive order, issued August 10, calling for children to receive fewer life-saving immunizations.

The executive order is the Trump administration's second attempt this year to slash the number of vaccines children receive.

An earlier policy change announced by the acting CDC director in January, which would have slashed the number of recommended immunizations, has been blocked by a federal judge.

CIDRAP, 08/11/2026

Proposed Fed OT Law: 1.5 to Double Time

Workers eligible for overtime pay would earn twice their regular rate for hours worked beyond 40 hours in a week if newly proposed legislation become law.

Five Democratic U.S. senators proposed the "*Double Wage for Overtime Act*" which would increase the overtime rate from 1.5 times a worker's regular hourly rate as set by the 1938 Fair Labor Standard Act.

If passed as written, it is estimated the bill would boost the incomes of approximately 13.4 million workers – many of them in healthcare.

Currently only California requires double time.

Senior Living, 08/12/2026

COVID Vax Conspirators Distrust Gov't & Media

Researchers at Ritssho University in Tokyo surveyed people in Japan about their beliefs in COVID-19 conspiracy theories to understand who adheres to such ideas.

The largest group of conspiracy theorists did not trust the government and pharmaceutical companies and believed they hide information from the public on such topics as a purported connection between vaccines and autism (i.e., institutional conspiracy beliefs).

People who held institutional conspiracy beliefs were younger, were skeptical of mass media, and did not engage regularly with traditional media.

The researchers said, "This aligns with prior research linking conspiracy beliefs to anti-establishment attitudes and populist worldviews."

Scientific Reports, 08/11/2026

Damages Thrown Out New Trial Ordered

An appeals court has thrown out jury reduced damages in a nearly \$20 million wrongful death case after a resident experienced falls, malnutrition and other injuries that allegedly contributed to her 2019 death.

The family sued Brinton Manor of Glen Mills, Pennsylvania and its business partners.

A jury found in favor of the family and awarded a total of about \$19 million.

On post-trial motions, the initial trial court threw out claims and lowered damages, but now the Pennsylvania Superior Court has called for a new trial to determine damages.

McKnight's, 08/10/2026

Organ Donors Still Showed Signs of Life

HHS has begun the decertification of Network for Hope, the federally designated organ procurement organization serving Kentucky and parts of Indiana, Ohio and West Virginia, following federal reviews that uncovered serious patient safety failures.

CMS initiated the decertification action after investigations revealed persistent safety issues, including instances where the organ harvesting process was initiated on patients who still showed active signs of life.

According to federal officials, investigators found evidence of inadequate neurological assessments, poor coordination with hospital care teams, questionable consent practices and improper classification of causes of death.

HHS news release, 08/07/2026

First New SNF in West Virginia in 15 years

Governor Patrick Morrisey joined state and local leaders to break ground on a new \$40 million CommuniCare nursing facility in Cabell County.

The 60,000-square-foot facility marks the first new nursing home built in the region since 2011. The new facility will include 124 beds, including 24 private rooms and 50 semi-private rooms, and is expected to be completed in approximately 18 months.

The project is expected to create approximately 150 high-quality jobs while expanding access to long-term care

WTAP-TV, 08/07/2026

IN THE TRENCHES

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

THE WHITE HOUSE: In an executive order, President Trump called for a controversial overhaul of the childhood immunization schedule. The announcement could further erode trust in vaccines and public health, in the midst of foodborne and infectious disease outbreaks, including measles. In announcing the executive order the president reiterated his belief that vaccines cause autism (*Axios*).

AMERICA: The president of the American Medical Association said President Trump's new recommendations on childhood immunizations put "children's health at risk," joining the chorus of medical experts criticizing the executive order. "Vaccines are among the most thoroughly studied, effective tools we have to protect children from serious vaccine-preventable diseases," Dr. Willie Underwood III said (*The Hill*).

THE WORLD: the State Department notified Congress that it would send \$600 million to Gavi, the organization that helps low-income countries buy essential childhood immunizations. HHS Sec. Kennedy withdrew American support. It was the latest in a series of financial commitments from the U.S. government to international organizations. Over the past two months, the U.S. has made financial commitments that hint at a limited return to global health and humanitarian assistance partnerships (*The New York Times*).

WASHINGTON, D.C: Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said President Trump "certainly" wants him to investigate perceived links between autism and vaccines. Kennedy made the remark during a heated interview with CNN's Dana Bash on "State of the Union," when Bash asked if the Wall Street Journal was accurate in reporting that Trump wants Kennedy to "probe the link" (*The Hill*).

AMERICA: The CDC confirmed 53 new US measles cases, bringing the total for the year to 2,371 cases. All but 16 of the cases were locally acquired in 45 US jurisdictions, with the rest tied to international travel. There have been 37 new measles outbreaks reported this year, with 94% of cases associated with outbreaks - defined as three or more cases (*CIDRAP*).

AMERICA: An outbreak of Salmonella in 27 states was pinned on Mexico-grown jalapeño peppers distributed by Coast Citrus Distributors. To date, the CDC said 345 cases and 36 hospitalizations have been reported (*CDC*).

NEW MEXICO: The total economic cost of New Mexico's 2025 measles outbreak was \$5.4 million. That comes out to \$53,522 per person infected with the airborne virus that causes the disease. New Mexico's outbreak, which occurred from February through September 2025, resulted in 100 confirmed cases of measles, including seven hospitalizations and one death. Of those infected, 53% were aged 18 years or older and 85% were unvaccinated (*Annals of Internal Medicine*).

WASHINGTON, D.C: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is assuring Americans that they should feel confident eating fresh produce again, seeking to ease concerns over the nation's food supply after a cyclospora outbreak linked to iceberg lettuce spread across more than a dozen states. "We have the safest food supply in the world," acting FDA Commissioner Kyle Diamantas said in an interview with CNBC. "Americans should feel confident in eating fresh produce including leafy greens at this point" (*The Hill*).

AMERICA: It's been a record-breaking year in the United States for measles, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reporting 2,371 cases this year, with 93% of these infections occurring in unvaccinated people. This is the highest number of measles cases since 1991 (*CIDRAP*).

AMERICA: as the surge in measles infections has reached numbers not seen in the past 35 years, HHS Sec. Robert F

Kennedy Jr. told American parents that they should get their children vaccinated against measles. Kennedy, a leading vaccination skeptic who has spent years amplifying misinformation about vaccines, including the shot that protects against measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), made his call in the course of a contentious interview with CNN's State of the Union on Sunday morning. (*The Guardian*).

MEXICO: The outbreak of Cyclospora from farm products grown at Taylor Farms in Mexico is nothing new. The company has a long history of outbreaks, including at least five involving Cyclospora and E. coli. In the past the company has sought to deflect responsibility. But experts have raised concerns about the self-policing of the food safety industry. Another report said Taylor Farms had not been inspected in seven years (*CNN*).

WASHINGTON, D.C: Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. reportedly discussed eliminating the recommendation that all kids get the polio vaccine and weighed whether to scrap CDC's entire childhood vaccination schedule (*Reuters via CNN*).

THE WORLD: *BMJ Public Health* retracted a study on excess mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic that appeared to suggest vaccination and other countermeasures as a possible explanation. In its investigation, Princess Máxima Center in the Netherlands found that the article "pays disproportionate attention to the possibility that COVID-19 containment measures and vaccination might have caused excess mortality" the notice explained, adding that the paper didn't actually investigate any of the causes of excess mortality (*MedPage Today*).

THE WORLD: Chronic viral infections are ubiquitous in humans, with individuals carrying multiple viruses that can reactivate during physiological stress, including severe illness. Notably, SARS-CoV-2 infection has been shown to reactivate chronic viruses. Severe COVID may awaken dormant viruses, leading to autoimmune disease, long COVID, and other long-term conditions (*Nature*).

Did COVID-19 Cause Big Closure of SNFs? Nope!

Concerns about nursing home closures rose in the past decade as the pandemic put unprecedented strain on facilities.

Industry groups warned that falling occupancy and worker shortages could trigger financial losses and force hundreds of facilities to close.

Didn't happen.

A University of Pennsylvania study identified 1,440 nursing home closures from 2016 to 2025 - found that overall rates of nursing home closures averaged only 0.9% from 2016 to 2019 and 1.1% in 2020 to 2025.

Nearly 29% of closures left rural communities without a nursing home within 10 miles or where nearby facilities could not take on displaced residents.

Penn LDI, 08/11/2026

CareTrust Posts Record \$900M Q2 LTC Investments

CareTrust REIT delivered the largest single investment quarter in its history during the second quarter of 2026, driven by continuous expansion in skilled nursing.

The real estate investment trust deployed approximately \$900 million in capital during Q2 at a blended stabilized yield of 8.9%, pushing its year-to-date expenditures to \$1.5 billion and prompting management to raise full-year earnings projection.

Thanks to the record-setting pace, CareTrust updated its 2026 projection for normalized funds from operations per share to between \$2.03 and \$2.06. That represents a 16.2% year-over-year increase at the midpoint.

McKnight's, 08/09/2026

Group Sues Illinois to Stop Assisted Suicide Law

A Catholic bishop, four Catholic doctors and a Lutheran nursing home have sued the state of Illinois over a new physician-assisted suicide law.

Under the law, patients with a terminal prognosis of six months or less can

request assisted suicide. Two doctors must concur regarding the terminal diagnosis and other stipulations.

The lawsuit states the law violates religious and free-speech rights of the First and 14th amendments.

A Catholic-run public interest law firm is seeking a federal block on the "End of Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act" before it takes effect Sept. 12.

OSV News, 08/12/2026

Top Execs Get Top Pay Hikes MDS Nurses Doing Well

Of 950 building reporting in the Hospital & Healthcare Compensation Service annual survey, executives averaged a 3.42% increase, just besting RNs who saw their pay jump an average of 3.41% during the survey period.

CNA's 2.68% increase is up from last year's 2.53% average.

MDS coordinators saw their average pay increase 4.25% in buildings reporting in both 2025 and 2026 - the largest increase among any group.

This year, social services directors saw the average raise hit 3.66% - 2.5 times the previous year.

McKnight's, 08/13/2026

Florida to Spend Millions On Rural Healthcare

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is touting \$188 million in funding to help expand healthcare access throughout Florida's rural communities.

The awards are a part of Florida's share from the Rural Health Transformation Program, a \$50 billion federal initiative administered by CMS. The program began this year and runs five fiscal years, with \$10 billion available annually,

Florida received \$209 million through the initiative. The funds, administered by the Agency for Health Care Administration, will increase workforce education, expand access to care through mobile health units and telehealth services, and support rural hospitals and clinics.

WUSF - NPR, 08/11/2026

ONE COLUMN

Ahead of Potential De-reg Providers Call for Reform

Ahead of a potential CMS proposed rule aimed at reducing administrative burdens across health care – including nursing homes – that could be released in August, providers are urging the agency to standardize surveyor training, Medicare medical reviews and Minimum Data Set requirements.

They argue the changes would improve consistency, reduce administrative burdens and allow nursing homes to devote more resources to resident care and quality improvement.

Currently in the early stages of development, the potential rule is being shaped by the Trump administration's April request for information (RFI), which sought recommendations to reduce regulatory and administrative burdens.

LeadingAge, the largest association of nonprofit providers of post-acute care providers, submitted its comments to HHS in June on home health, hospice, Medicare Advantage, PACE and nursing home regulations, including proposals to streamline reporting and eliminate duplicative requirements.

"[W]e outlined several recommendations across provider settings that would support the healthcare workforce by providing flexibility in staffing and operations, reduce administrative burden by streamlining reporting and data collection, and give patients better access to care in a more timely manner," said Jodi Eyigor, VP of health policy at LeadingAge.

The potential rule is currently under review for publication at the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). As is typical during the preliminary stages before a proposed rule is officially published, CMS has not yet issued updates to stakeholders.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) states that such a rule hopes to ease direct patient care by easing certain administrative burdens on providers.

Skilled Nursing News, 07/10/2026

From Special Focus Facility to a 5-Star Rating

In January, Majestic Care of Columbus (Ohio) graduated from the Special Focus Facilities list after a 31-month stint on the federal watch list.

But the 120-bed nursing home was just getting the turnaround started. In April, it earned a coveted 5-star overall rating from CMS cementing a true recovery.

"Now," Majestic CEO Paul Pruitt said, "comes the truly hard part: converting the strategies that helped transform Majestic's operations into repeatable, systemic changes that drive quality across the chain's 41 nursing homes. Characters can change; location can change. All those factors can change, but the systems have to be sustainable."

McKnight's, 08/11/2026

CMS to Assist with Washington State PHE

CMS announced additional resources and flexibility available in response to the wildfires- generated Public Health Emergency in Washington state.

CMS said it is working closely with Washington state and others to put flexibility in place to ensure thousands of residents affected by this natural disaster have access to needed care.

The agency said it will assist with resources and waivers to ensure healthcare facilities can continue to operate and provide access to care for those affected.

CMS' blanket waivers are available to affected providers in Washington state who have been affected by the wildfires- retroactively from Aug. 1, 2026.

CMS.gov, 08/11/2026

New Spin on Green House Style SNFs

AgingIN and Southern Administrative Services have launched an initiative meant to help nonprofit organizations build and sustain skilled nursing using the Green House model.

SAS currently operates five Green House campuses in Arkansas.

The initial effort will be a 120-bed Green House project in Savoy, Illinois.

AgingIN said that SAS' experience in development, financing, regulation and operations will help support development and implementation of the Savoy community's 10 cottages.

In the county where Savoy is located there are about 400 LTC beds, but a projected need of 750. The collaboration between AgingIN and SAS is meant to bridge that gap.

Senior Living, 08/12/2026

COVID Research Leads To New Flu Vaccine

Moderna announced the FDA approved the trivalent flu vaccine mRNA-1010 for use in all adults age 50+. It's the first approved flu vaccine to use the mRNA technology that sped COVID-19 vaccine development.

Moderna received traditional approval in adults ages 50 to 64 years; accelerated approval was granted for those 65 and older.

The FDA's decision "demonstrates the continued strength and versatility of our mRNA platform," said Stéphane Bancel, Moderna's CEO, in the statement. "This approval also reflects the ongoing potential of our mRNA platform to help address important public health challenges through continued scientific innovation."

MedPage Today, 08/06/2026

Prioritize Decolonization Reduce MDROs

Multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) are endemic in nursing homes, with studies showing more than 50% of residents carry MDROs on their skin.

Using chlorhexidine wipes and nasal products to decolonize the skin of nursing home residents has been proven to substantially reduce MDRO carriage and subsequent infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Now a study conducted in two Southern California nursing homes found that only universal decolonization of residents was associated with reduced carriage MDROs and bedroom contamination.

JAMA Network Open, 08/06/2026

Briefly in the News

The American Red Cross declared only the second national blood supply crisis in its history. Blood donations fell to a four-year summer low. The organization, which supplies roughly 40% of the nation's blood, said it's looking for all types of blood—with an emphasis on type O blood. Donations this summer are not "keeping pace with hospital demand," with the Red Cross citing extreme heat, poor air quality and foodborne illnesses as factors in the low donor turnout (***Fierce Healthcare***).

All four inaugural teams of the brand-new Women's Pro Baseball League are named after influential women in American history. The New York Heights take inspiration from civil rights leader Dorothy Irene Height; the Los Angeles Queens are named after Lizzie "Queen of the Diamond" Murphy who broke barriers in professional baseball; the San Francisco Firebells take after Lillie Hitchcock Coit, known as "Firebelle," who championed volunteer firefighters and Boston's team, the Hunters, are named after Harriot Kezia Hunt, a practicing physician and the first woman to apply to Harvard Medical School 179 years ago (***MedPage Today***).

The Trump administration announced it intended to end a Biden-era program that for the past two years has helped tamp down the cost of monthly premiums for drug coverage for people on Medicare. The decision means that millions of Americans 65 and older could face higher Medicare drug premiums next year, when the cost of living is already a major concern (***CIDRAP***).

People who experience severe heart attacks may have higher concentrations of microplastics and nanoplastics in their blood, in a recent study, researchers in Italy analyzed blood samples from the coronary arteries of 61 patients undergoing angiograms and found that 84% of patients experiencing an active, severe heart attack had detectable levels of microplastics and nanoplastics in their blood. By comparison, plastic particles were found in 40% of patients with chronic heart disease and just 32% of those with normal coronary arteries (***The Hill***).