

IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals
in 100 Words-or-Less

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Vol 10

08/30/2026

They said it

"There's real-life consequences to scaring people and not relying on actual doctors, actual medical professionals, to provide unbiased information" Penn. Gov. Josh Shapiro sharply criticizing HHS Sec Kennedy after two people die in the state from measles

"Our message to CMS is simple: don't penalize good actors in the effort to root out fraud. The agency should focus on targeting bad actors without imposing excessive reporting requirements" Jodi Eyigor, vice president of health policy at LeadingAge on the proposed CMS rule regarding home care – but expected to have implications for SNF

Medicare, Medicaid Fraud Three SNFs Cough up \$9M

Three Western New York nursing homes agreed to pay a combined \$9 million to resolve allegations of Medicare and Medicaid fraud.

Safire Rehabilitation of Northtowns, Safire Rehabilitation of Southtowns, and Williamsville Suburban were accused of submitting inflated therapy reimbursement documentation including therapy schedules and goals based on insurance policy rather than medical need, and pressuring therapists to provide care against their recommendations.

Residents also were pressured to attend unnecessary or unwanted sessions, and referrals were alleged to have been altered to justify unreasonable and unnecessary therapy.

Buffalo Toronto Public Media, 8/17/2026

A Home Care Rule Could Spill Over to SNFs

The Trump administration has made fraud, waste and abuse of Medicaid and Medicare and other programs a government-wide priority. One of the first glimpses of that has come through the proposed CMS rule for home care for FY2027

A proposed rule would expand the circumstances under which CMS could revoke a provider's Medicare enrollment and, in certain circumstances, make revocations retroactive to the date of the conduct or event that triggered the action, rather than applying them prospectively.

Although the rule is technically for home care it is widely believed to have broader applicability to long-term care, including nursing homes.

Skilled Nursing News, 08/28/2026

GAO Urged to Study MA Contracts

LeadingAge is urging the Government Accountability Office to look hard at how Medicare Advantage plans use contracting advantages and their ability to set payment rates to control profit at the cost of limiting access to care.

LeadingAge leaders met with GAO specialists working on an MA report requested four Democrat U.S. senators. LeadingAge shared members' interest "and sometimes frustration" in contracting with MA plans that are required to be considered in-network.

The full report is expected to be published in 2027 and is expected to examine oversight of MA provider network adequacy and factors influencing provider participation in MA networks.

McKnight's, 08/19/2026

Higher RN Staffing Linked To Fewer Hospitalizations

Nursing homes that implemented increased registered nurse (RN) hours per resident day (HPRD) and an increased RN share of total nursing HPRD experienced fewer resident hospitalizations and outpatient ED visits.

The study analyzed PBJ data from 14,993 nursing homes.

In the total nursing HPRD model, total HPRD was linked to lower hospitalization rates. With regard to staff composition, a 10-percentage-point higher RN share was associated with 0.560 fewer ED visits per 1,000 resident-days and a more RN-intensive staffing mix was associated with fewer ED visits.

McKnight's Clinical Daily, 08/26/2026

Accuses Former Execs Of Stealing Trade Secrets

Genesis HealthCare and its accountable care organization are suing a group of former executives, alleging they stole trade secrets, client information and financial models to fuel the "rapid ascent" of a competitor they formed.

Genesis accused Kristen Krzyzewski and four other high-ranking staff members of taking advantage of the larger company's bankruptcy to spread disinformation for their own gain; and of retaining "significant volumes of confidential information" and recruiting former staff members — including some with non-compete clauses — to help launch her own plan, operating as True LTC

Genesis is currently more than a year into bankruptcy.

McKnight's, 08/26/2026

ED Drug Could Help You Live Longer

Tadalafil - better known by its brand name Cialis - is one of the most prescribed drugs for erectile dysfunction - but it may be useful for other problems.

Tadalafil belongs to the same class of drugs as sildenafil, i.e., Viagra - with the primary difference being that its effect lasts considerably longer.

While both have been on the market for decades, a handful of large studies, many of them published in recent years, have shown that men taking the drug fare better: They have lower rates of cardiovascular disease and death, and, in some cases, are less likely to develop dementia.

NPR, 08/17/2026

**IN THE NEWS will
be off next week
for Labor Day**

IN THE TRENCHES

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

PENNSYLVANIA: Two unvaccinated Pennsylvania residents have died after contracting measles, the first such deaths in the state in 35 years and the first reported in the United States this year. The deaths prompted Gov. Josh Shapiro (D) to sharply confront the nation's health secretary over federal vaccine messaging that he said is confusing and harmful. Both the people who died were residents of Lancaster County. The Pennsylvania Health Department declined to release their ages or other information, citing the privacy of the people and their families (*The Washington Post*).

AMERICA: With 393 confirmed cases in 2026, Pennsylvania has the third-highest measles case count following South Carolina's 670 and Utah's 526. The latest CDC data for 2026 show 2,777 confirmed cases in the U.S. stemming from 36 outbreaks across 45 states -- the highest total since 1991, when nearly 10,000 cases were confirmed. Last year the nation tallied 2,289 confirmed cases, including three deaths, the first in more than a decade (*MedPage Today*).

AMERICA: Half a million dollars. That's about how much it cost several public health agencies to contain one small measles outbreak in the Denver area this year. Though it was a relatively modest cluster - a total of 10 cases involving nine children and one adult - it nevertheless consumed 6,785 hours of labor by state and local workers to track and snuff out the outbreak after exposed individuals traveled through grocery stores, schools, fast-food restaurants and more (*The Washington Post*).

WASHINGTON, D.C.: Dr. Mehmet Oz, head of CMS, countered President Donald Trump's recent claims that the measles, mumps and rubella - or MMR - vaccine could be lethal. In an interview with CBS' "Face the Nation," host Margaret Brennan repeatedly asked Oz to clarify the president's remarks before he

finally stated, "The MMR vaccine is not a lethal vaccine" (*Politico*).

WASHINGTON: D.C.: "Now instead of your child getting two shots, she has to get six shots," Sen. Bill Cassidy said on ABC News's "This Week," referring to Trump splitting up the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine into three different shots. The heads of multiple medical associations have criticized the order and said it puts children's health at risk. Cassidy echoed their rhetoric, saying the new guidance is "stupid" and indicative of the president not understanding Americans' financial concerns (*The Hill*).

AMERICA: HHS announced a \$4 million initiative to expand access to rapid, point-of-care syphilis testing. The goal is to reach women in emergency departments and other nontraditional healthcare settings. Congenital syphilis has been on the rise in the past 12 years, with 4,000 cases reported in 2024. In 2023, syphilis contributed to 279 stillbirths and infant deaths. HHS estimates that 83% of congenital syphilis cases in 2023 could have been prevented with timely testing (*CIDRAP*).

BOLIVIA: Two indigenous groups in the Bolivian Amazon had the lowest COVID death rates ever reported at the height of the pandemic -- less than one-tenth of 1%. Researchers say that the finding has implications for disease-mitigation efforts in future pandemics. For a study, a team of researchers from the *Universita di Corsica* in France interviewed and took blood samples from members of two communities. They are hoping the information will be useful in future pandemics (*Social Science and Medicine*).

THE WORLD: Two new studies involving 75,000 babies, confirmed that recently developed immunizations against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) protect infants in their first year of life. The research included studies in France and the UK confirm that the immunizations are effective in the real world. RSV hospitalizes 1.4 million babies and kills 46,000 babies each year (*JAMA Pediatrics*).

AMERICA: For the fourth consecutive year U.S. kindergarten kids' vaccination rates inched down again last year and the

share of children with exemptions rose to an all-time high. The percentage of kids exempted from vaccine requirements rose from 3.6% in 2024 to 4.2% in 2025. The vast majority are parents withholding shots for nonmedical reasons. Exemptions increased in 41 states and the District of Columbia (*CDC*).

CONGO: Ebola is reviving suspicions of profiteering in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where distrust over how response money is handled is undermining the community cooperation needed to contain the world's fastest-growing outbreak. (*Bloomberg*).

THE WORLD: The COVID-19 vaccine may give brain cancer patients a bonus shot at survival. Patients who received the vaccine within 100 days before biopsy or tumor surgery lived twice as long as those who didn't get the shot, scientists report July 31 at medRxiv.org. This link existed only for COVID-19 vaccines, not other vaccines that the team investigated (*Science News*).

THE WORLD: After reports surfaced of rare cases of myocarditis following COVID-19 vaccination, some parents worried that mRNA vaccines might cause heart disease in their children. But a study published last week looking at more than 4 million children and young adults concludes that those who receive a Pfizer/Biotech COVID-19 vaccine have a lower risk of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle), pericarditis (inflammation of the sac surrounding the heart), and death than those who do not (*Vaccine*).

AMERICA: Although foodborne pathogens have been in the spotlight all summer, another highly contagious virus is picking up steam: coronavirus. After a lull this spring and early summer, COVID-19 infections are ramping up again across the country. As of Aug. 12, the CDC estimates that COVID cases are growing in all 50 states (*Today.com*).

TAIWAN: A retrospective case-control study from Taiwan indicated early antiviral therapy at home for kids with influenza lowered the risk of related hospitalization (*MedPage Today*).

COVID Technology Could Be Cancer Breakthrough

Drugmakers Moderna and Merck revealed an experimental drug that uses messenger RNA to deliver a vaccine customized to a patient's tumors, effectively prevented skin cancer recurrence in a large-scale clinical trial.

Researchers have explored the use of mRNA drugs - the same technology behind the leading coronavirus vaccines that helped end the pandemic - to treat cancer for years, but this one is the first to clear a Phase 3 trial.

That opens the door for the FDA to potentially approve the first ever mRNA-based cancer treatment, in what would be a landmark moment for the fast-emerging field.

The Washington Post, 08/19/20

Mayor Arrested - Allegedly Ripped Off COVID Funds

Lawrence, Massachusetts Mayor Brian DePeña, was busted on federal wire fraud and money laundering charges, accused of fraudulently obtaining \$1.5 million in COVID relief money.

The FBI said DePeña was arrested for "allegedly cashing in on a public health crisis and blatantly defrauding a government program meant to keep businesses afloat during the pandemic."

DePeña allegedly sought repeated increases on a legitimate \$150,000 COVID government loan until it ballooned to roughly \$1.5 million — then diverted the cash away from his personal business to pay off high interest loans on properties, back taxes and his mayoral campaign.

The New York Post, 08/15/2026

Veterans Home Workers' Suit Will Go to Trial

Veterans home employees say they were forbidden from wearing masks during the pandemic's deadliest phase.

New Jersey's efforts to dismiss a lawsuit filed on behalf of nursing home workers at the state-operated Veterans Memorial Home at Menlo Park during the COVID

pandemic have been rejected by a judge, clearing the way for trial.

The facility, along with another state-run home in Paramus, reported some of the highest COVID-related death tolls in the nation.

Many would later blame staff directives prohibiting the use of masks or gloves because it "might scare" the hundreds of elderly veterans

The state has paid out about \$69 million for 190 veterans who died during the pandemic, but nothing to employees.

NJ.com, 08/18/2026

NY SNFs Urge Trump to Keep TPS for Haitians

A coalition representing 400 New York nursing homes is urging the Trump administration to shelve its decision to rescind Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for thousands of Haitians who work in the facilities.

In a letter to Homeland Security Director Markwayne Mullin, CEO of the NY State Health Facilities Association Stephen Hanse said New York has 40,00 Haitian TPS holders, 7000 of which are CNAs and direct care givers.

He asked Mullin to consider exempting the affected Haitian CNAs from losing their TPS status while they apply to stay in the US.

New York Post, 08/17/2026

Folks with Parkinson's Disease Should Workout

A research project found that participating in exercise programs that integrate aerobic, resistance and balance training is linked to functional and psychosocial benefits in disease stages among older adults with Parkinson's disease.

The review found that exercise induces muscle-brain crosstalk through exerkines, which regulate neuroinflammation, mitochondria and dopaminergic survival in people with Parkinson's.

Additionally, regular exercise was associated with reduced apathy, fatigue and cognitive decline.

Neuroprotection, August 2026

ONE COLUMN

CMS' New and Improved (Maybe) Data Demand

A series of incremental new data collection, compliance review and reporting requirements stand to fundamentally change how regulators assess quality — and just how quickly nursing homes have to help them do it.

Together, new skilled nursing Minimum Data Set, Quality Reporting Program and Value-Based Purchasing regulations are likely to sweep providers into a new era of accountability. Oversight programs that once seemed disjointed are expected to align in a more coordinated push for quality improvement.

But with any change, there will also be winners and losers as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services asks for more data, more quickly — and with more potential consequences.

"That's part of a longer-term shift that CMS is undergoing, but when you add this [faster reporting] to some of the things that are going on — the Risk-Based Survey, with the icon — it looks like they're on track to try to make it not just more timely, but also more accurate," Chris Dawe, president of Curana Health, told *McKnight's Long-Term Care News*. "I think what CMS is more interested in right now is building up a series of policies to put SNFs under increasing accountability and pressure on quality."

Some of the tweaks that are expected include:

- reporting all MDS data within 45 days, shrinking the current window by about two-thirds by 2029
- reporting quality metrics across all payer types, including Medicare Advantage and private pay, starting in fiscal 2031
- meeting more performance metrics for a shot at the coveted Care Compare golden trophy that qualifies facilities for Risk-Based Surveys
- new alternative payment models such as TEAM and CJR-X that force SNFs to better partner with acute providers and clinicians to keep referrals.

McKnight's, 08/19/2026

You May Not Have Heard of the Elderly ER

Since 2017, the American College of Emergency Physicians has accredited 624 Eds as geriatric emergency departments across the United States, including 73 in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers.

Few of these units are restricted to older patients. Instead, they serve all ages but incorporate senior-friendly practices and protocols in an environment aimed at staving off disorientation, falls, and other elder hazards.

Emergency departments don't routinely screen for delirium" and cognitive impairment, "But it's one of the first things geriatric emergency departments do as well as a careful review of all the patient's medications.

The New York Times, 08/18/2026

NY - Violence Prevention Law About to Go into Effect

Nursing homes and hospitals in New York face a September deadline to implement workplace violence prevention programs following a new law passed last year.

Starting September 18, nursing homes and general hospitals have 12 months to establish a program to address threats and hazards related to workplace violence.

Hospitals have separate obligations to review their safety and security protocols annually.

New York general hospitals are also required to have continuous emergency department security on staff. The required number of officers depends on hospital location and size.

Fisher Phillips, 08/13/2026

Your Resident is Injured You Gotta Tell the State

A new law in Illinois requires nursing facilities to notify the Illinois Department of Public Health within 24 hours when a reportable incident or accident results in serious physical harm or injury to a resident or requires immediate medical attention including hospitalization.

Facilities must also submit a narrative summary to the department within five days.

The bill recently signed by the Governor was passed unanimously by both houses of the legislature in May.

Riverbender.com, 08/11/2026

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The New York Post, 08/15/2026

Foreign Born Docs Serve Underserved Patients

Physicians who aren't U.S. citizens have run into immigration difficulties during the second Trump administration, including exorbitant visa fees and travel bans.

Physicians who were not born in the U.S. treated 22 million Medicare beneficiaries in 2024.

Yet, foreign-born physicians are disproportionately helping to serve communities that have more difficulties accessing care.

Specifically, more patients treated by doctors born abroad were Black (9.5% vs 7%), Latino (6.6% vs 3.9%), dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid (20.9% vs 11.7%) and living in high-poverty zip codes (19.8% vs 15.9%).

JAMA, 8/12/2026

Briefly in the News

A trend urging people to finish dinner by 5 p.m. is getting a second look from doctors, after a randomized trial found that adults who confined their eating to an eight-hour daily window for 12 weeks kept off several more pounds a full year later, compared to those who ate on a normal schedule. The concept of eating dinner early is not new - the "early bird special" has been around for decades. What's changed is the volume (***ABC News***).

A peptide vaccine targeting KRAS mutations in pancreatic cancer showed preliminary evidence of activity in a small study of high-risk patients. The vaccine elicited KRAS-specific T-cell responses in 18 of 20 patients with mutations associated with pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (***MedPage Today***).

Democrats say the Trump administration's new Medicaid work requirements - especially the narrow definition of who can get an exemption for medical reasons - are way too harsh. Conservatives contend they're not tough enough. Some Republican-led states want to be even stricter. Starting in January, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, and Utah will impose work rules stricter than those the administration is requiring (***Politico***).

Around age 50, the brain's memory center begins swapping out its longtime immune cells for more inflammatory ones, a discovery that may explain how normal aging paves the way for dementia, especially its most talked about form, Alzheimer's disease. "Honestly, this surprised me," Furhan Qureshi, a board-certified internal medicine physician, told *Newsweek*. "We were taught in med school that brain's main immune cells tracked in the study are lifers—they show up before you're born and stay with you, renewing themselves in the brain (***Newsweek***).

Jeremy Farrar, MD, PhD, announced he would step down from his role as assistant director-general to the World Health Organization. He has made no public comment on his decision to resign, but colleagues said he was increasingly frustrated with the bureaucracy of the organization (***The Telegraph***).