

IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals
in 100 Words-or-Less

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They said it

"This argument is a nonstarter" Senior Judge Sharon Aycock of the US District Court for Northern Mississippi in rejecting a lawsuit to make all facilities in a chain responsible for OT reporting lapses of a single SNF

"It's almost like the CDC wants to make it more difficult to count confirmed deaths" a CDC source commenting on the CDC and the Council of state and Territorial Epidemiologists working since summer on a definition of measles death

"Anything RFK Jr. touches, I'm not confident of its veracity. I have zero confidence in anything that comes from his department" Amesh Adalja of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security

"I think he's dangerous and incompetent" Richard Pan, MD, MPH, a pediatrician and former state senator who is running as a Democrat for a U.S. House seat in California referring to RFK, Jr.

2 Staffers & Administrator Charged in Resident Death

A 34-year-old woman who required constant supervision choked on a meatball and "slumped face down" on the table but without help for nearly 90 minutes at The Grand at Mohawk Valley in Ilion, NY. She died in the facility.

Administrator Michael Sutter, nurse Mara Lasher and dietary Aide Mary Stocking face first-degree endangering the welfare of a vulnerable older adult. Stocking also is charged with second degree manslaughter.

The unidentified woman was admitted to the facility three days prior to the incident with instructions requiring continuous one-on-one supervision. Investigators allege Sutter ended that supervision after her first night.

Yahoo News, 09/23/2026

Suit filed to Stop Nursing Home from Closing

When the Care Center at Sunset Lake, a county-run facility in Liberty, NY, abruptly announced it was closing, a group of residents, family members and employees filed a lawsuit in state Supreme Court opposing the closure.

The lawsuit alleges county officials unlawfully concealed the process from the public by failing to hold a public hearing or vote and did not follow state rules governing nursing home closures.

But the lawsuit has hit an unexpected snag: For various reasons no county judge has agreed to oversee the case. Five judges recused themselves.

There's only one other SNF in the county.

The Times-Union, 09/16/2026

FOLLOW UP

Nah! Baby! Nah! - for Adult Care Center Closing - For Now

A New York Supreme Court justice has granted an injunction against closing the county-owned Adult Care Center at Sunset Lake until further notice.

Sullivan County, the owner of the Liberty, N.Y. ACC, must stop the closure plan for the facility while a lawsuit brought by a former resident of the facility, family members and employees of the facility, plays out in the courts.

Bryant's court saw the case after five justices in Sullivan County recused themselves, with court documents revealing that one justice recused himself because they had family in the facility.

River Reporter, 09/22/2026

Court Rejects Attempt to Take OT Suit Chainwide

A federal court threw out a lawsuit against 13 nursing homes, finding that shared ownership does not make each liable for overtime reporting lapses at the others.

CNA Jessica Craft sued Louisville Healthcare, Trend Consultants and 15 other nursing homes alleging they violated the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and failed to pay required overtime.

Trend, a consulting firm that manages the facilities' operations and processes their payroll, and 13 nursing home defendants asked the court to dismiss allegations against them, arguing that they were not Craft's employer.

The court noted that each facility is considered a distinct legal entity.

McKnight's, 09/21/2026

Spending on Contract Staff Almost Back to 'Square One'

In 2019, Maine hospitals belonging to the association spent nearly \$99 million, which was typical at the time, to hire 535 contract staff. Three years later, when COVID-19 cases were at their highest levels, that number quadrupled to \$560 million for nearly 2,200 temporary staff.

The Maine Hospital Association, which represents 32 of the state's 34 hospitals, said that spending from its member hospitals has dropped each year since peaking in 2022.

This year, the hospitals are projected to spend around \$214 million on contract staffing, still above an inflation-adjusted "normal" of around \$145 million.

Maine Monitor, 09/21/2026

White House Stops Effort To Control NIH Grants

The White House has backed down from drafting an executive order that could further cement President Trump's ability to control billions of dollars in scientific grants and expand the administration's pressure campaign against Harvard, et al.

Discussed at a highly contentious meeting at the White House the order aimed to create a new external committee with the power to veto awards in the National Institutes of Health's vast research portfolio.

People with knowledge of the effort say much of NIH's research does not conform to Mr. Trump's political agenda.

The New York Times, 09/20/2026

DAD JOKE!

"I told my doctor I broke my arm in two places. He told me to stop going to those places!"

IN THE TRENCHES

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

ATLANTA: With 177 new cases added, the US measles count has climbed to 3,471, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in its weekly update has yet to acknowledge any of the four measles-related deaths recently reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, two in babies and two involving adults (*CIDRAP*).

ATLANTA: The CDC acknowledged Wednesday that one measles death has occurred so far in 2026 but provided no clarity about who died or where. The agency previously declined to recognize four measles-associated deaths the Pennsylvania Health Department reported over the last month. On Wednesday, the CDC's measles outbreak page was updated to show one death with a note that the number "is subject to change" and that the agency will "update its reporting as additional information becomes available" (*NBC News*).

THE WHITE HOUSE: President Donald Trump he would be "demanding" drug companies further split up vaccines into five doses given in six-month intervals and claimed that doing so would reduce autism rates. "I think you're going to see a massive reduction in autism", he said, "and that's a big deal, a very big deal. We're going to be recommending that and actually demanding it" (*The Washington Post*).

CALIFORNIA: San Diego State University is facing a mumps outbreak confirmed by county health officials, with all five cases linked to student-athletes on the same team. SDSU reported three confirmed cases and two probable cases among these students, who are no longer considered contagious but have raised concerns across campus (*KFMB-TV*).

THE WORLD: Two new polls reveal cracks in both US and global trust in medicine, with one showing erosion in Americans' belief that the measles vaccine is safe for children and another finding that just over half of people in 13 countries say that, given conflicting

information, they always follow their physician's recommendations (*CIDRAP*).

SIX STATES: The CDC reported ten more people have fallen ill in a multistate Salmonella outbreak linked to broccoli sprouts. The outbreak of *Salmonella Bovismorbificans* has now sickened 32 people in six states, with three hospitalized. Illness-onset dates range from July 7 to September 3. Of the 27 people who've been interviewed, 26 reported eating sprouts or microgreens (*CIDRAP*).

MINNESOTA: Public health officials have confirmed the first case of measles in Minnesota in several months amid a resurgence of the preventable disease across the country. A resident of Fillmore County is the first in Minnesota since April (*MPR News*).

CONGO: The United States on Wednesday said it will give an additional \$267 million in humanitarian aid to help contain and alleviate the deadly Ebola epidemic ravaging the Democratic Republic of Congo. The sum adds to the \$887 million already provided. The State Department said the funds will go toward building Ebola treatment units, helping response teams bury bodies safely, buying medical equipment and expanding programs meant to contain the spread of the disease (*The Washington Post*).

CONNECTICUT: A Superior Court judge in Stamford on dismissed a lawsuit challenging a Connecticut law that eliminated religious exemptions from school vaccine requirements. The ruling 9/14 eliminated the six and final claim that the law violated the state and federal constitutions, as well as Connecticut's Religious Freedom and Restoration Act (*CT Mirror*).

CONGO: Some government officials from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have said there are signs the nation's fast-moving Ebola outbreak has peaked and transmission is slowing, but United Nations (UN) officials urge caution in expressing optimism just yet. Daily fatalities linked to the Ebola outbreak have fallen from a peak of around 50 deaths per day to about 30 currently, said the Minister of Public Health, Roger Kamba, in a video posted on X and new infection have gone from about 120 a day to 80 (*CIDRAP*).

PENNSYLVANIA: At least six babies in Pennsylvania have been born infected with measles, with two so sick they had to be admitted to intensive care. The growing outbreak is raising alarm among doctors who are treating the potentially deadly condition. Congenital measles is a disease that's rarely, if ever, seen in the U.S. (*NBC News*).

CAPITOL HILL: House Democrats on the Energy and Commerce Committee are demanding answers from the CDC regarding the agency's refusal to accept Pennsylvania's reporting of two measles deaths, the first in 35 years. The committee's ranking member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.) sent a letter to new agency director Erica Schwartz, calling for a briefing on CDC's measles response, including why it hasn't counted Pennsylvania's deaths in its official weekly tally (*The Hill*).

NEW YORK CITY: A second person has died in connection with the South Bronx Legionnaires' disease cluster according to the city's health commissioner. At least 13 people have tested positive for the disease and two were still in the hospital. Yankee Stadium is among the 10 buildings the health department ordered to clean and disinfect their cooling towers (*The Hill*).

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AMERICA: With agents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) often waiting outside medical clinics in some states, many immigrant families are now afraid to seek healthcare. About 39.6% of all pediatricians in the United States believe they're seeing fewer families for medical care because of worries about immigration status. Clinicians report approximately 26.2% of their patients come from families that immigrated to the United States (*Pediatrics*).

It Wasn't the Berlin Airlift, But Still Pretty Impressive

Supply chain issues during the COVID-19 pandemic made it hard to quickly access personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves.

So federal agencies took actions to transport PPE by air. For example, the Federal Aviation Administration allowed airlines to transport cargo in the passenger cabins of aircraft, and FEMA funded 437 flights to transport approximately 1.2 billion PPE items, primarily gloves, masks, and gowns.

Representatives of related industries and port authorities used several methods to expedite PPE. Like using "peel piles" at ports to pre-sort containers with PPE as they arrived allowing quicker access.

U.S. Government Accountability Office, 09/14/2026

COVID Return-To-Work Policy Updated for Workers

After two-plus years of silence, the CDC has updated work restrictions for healthcare personnel exposed to or infected with respiratory viruses, including COVID-19.

Asymptomatic healthcare personnel who have been exposed to a respiratory virus, can generally continue working but should use appropriate source control for five days following exposure.

When healthcare personnel become infected, the CDC says they can return to work on the fourth day after symptom onset or positive test results, provided they are fever-free for at least 24 hours, have improving symptoms and are feeling well enough to work.

McKnight's, 09/17/2026

State Lab Can't Handle SNF COVID Tests - NBD

Iowa's State Hygienic Lab leaders warned nursing homes that the lab wouldn't be able to process thousands of routine coronavirus tests of the facilities' staff members.

The federal government is now requiring facilities to perform the frequent virus tests on staff.

The warning drew condemnation from Democratic politicians and AARP Iowa. However, a nursing home industry leader said that private labs and new onsite testing machines should be able to handle the load.

Brent Willett, president of the Iowa Health Care Association, said the State Hygienic Lab has never processed coronavirus tests of facilities' staff members.

Des Moines Register, 09/18/2026

Omnicare Secures Court Approval for Bankruptcy Plan

Long-term care pharmacy Omnicare and its parent company, CVS Health, has won approval of a bankruptcy plan that followed an almost \$950 million judgment in a case over what a jury said was the fraudulent dispensing of drugs to residents of assisted living communities and other non-skilled nursing residential long-term care settings.

The bankruptcy plan, which will provide payment in full to all creditors and go into effect in October, was approved the US Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas

The approval comes as GenieRx Holding's bid to acquire Omnicare from CVS is expected to close during 2026.

Senior Living, 09/17/2026

Nurse to Prison - Allowed Toddler's O₂ to Get Too Low

Sharlene Pflugrad, a former in-home nurse, was sentenced after entering a no contest plea to a child neglect charge stemming from a 2025 incident in which she let a three-year-old Florida child's oxygen drop too low.

The child's parents the next morning, discovered his levels were low and he was taken to the hospital, where medical staff reportedly said he had suffered from prolonged oxygen deprivation. The child now has scar tissue on his lungs.

In a video, Pflugrad reportedly told the oxygen monitor to "shut up" as she changed it, while the child could be heard coughing.

Naples Daily News, 09/24/2026

ONE COLUMN

Here's the Top Wealthiest Healthcare People in America

The *Forbes* 400 this year and of those 400 billionaires, fifteen of them made their fortunes in Healthcare - four of them are physicians.

At the top of the pack is Thomas Frist Jr., MD, and his family, whose net worth is a whopping \$33.6 billion.

Frist and his father co-founded Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) Healthcare in the 1960s, which owns 190 hospitals and 2,400 sites of care. Frist, a former Air Force flight surgeon, is the 32nd wealthiest American but the richest person in the country with a healthcare business.

Next in line is Robert Duggan, the 96th richest person in the nation, who has a net worth of \$13.4 billion. In 2015, Duggan sold his biopharmaceutical company Pharmacyclics to Abbvie for a hefty profit. Duggan then invested in the oncology drug company Summit Therapeutics, where he is now co-CEO.

Charlie Mills chairman of the medical supplies giant Medline, which his dad and uncle founded in the 1960s, is the third wealthiest healthcare billionaire.

Patrick Soon-Shiong, MD, is the fourth richest healthcare billionaire and 151st wealthiest overall. Soon-Shiong is a surgeon who invented the blockbuster drug protein-bound paclitaxel (Abraxane) for treating cancer. Soon-Shiong owns the *Los Angeles Times* and about 4% of the Los Angeles Lakers.

While the 15 healthcare billionaires have a combined net worth of more than \$136 billion, tech giants still overwhelmingly top the *Forbes* list.

By comparison, Elon Musk's net worth of \$908 billion is more than six-and-a-half times richer than all the healthcare billionaires combined. Number two on the list is Jeff Bezos of Amazon whose net worth of \$378 billion has over 2-and-a-half times the combined healthcare billionaires.

MedPage Today, 09/22/2026

Employee Shoots Three Inside LA Assisted Living

Darryl Arnette Barnes, 60, a maintenance worker allegedly opened fire on co-workers inside a South Los Angeles assisted living facility, leaving three people hospitalized, one in critical condition.

The shooting began just before 11 a.m. September 21 at Progressive Home for the Elderly a community fixture associated with the century-old Progressive Community Missionary Baptist Church.

Barnes allegedly shot his boss in the face, a secretary in the chest and another employee in the arm.

Police arrested Barnes without a struggle inside the building. He has been charged with three counts of attempted murder - bond set at \$4 million.

KTLA-TV, 09/24/2026

COVID Reporting May End for Nursing Homes

Nursing homes would no longer be required to report each week how many residents were stricken by COVID and other respiratory diseases, under a Trump administration plan to repeal a key public health response to thousands of pandemic deaths.

A draft summary of the proposed rule outlines how the administration agrees with the industry's objections to weekly reporting of viral caseloads, calling it burdensome.

In its waning days, the Biden administration made COVID reporting rules permanent, adding influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (R.S.V.) to the list of threats that facilities also must track and record.

The New York Times, 09/23/2026

CMS Has Thumb on Referral Sources – Affects SNFs

Nursing homes are facing greater pressure to prove their value as CMS holds hospitals and ACOs more accountable for post-discharge costs, readmissions, LOS and patient outcomes - factors that can influence what facilities to which hospitals will refer.

The changes mean SNFs should be prepared to demonstrate their ability to control costs and reduce rehospitalizations, i.e., Hospitals will look for SNFs to help manage post-acute care cost.

"Hospitals will face high pressure to partner with high-quality post-discharge partners. Hospitals will look for SNFs to help manage post-acute care costs," said Jennifer Edwards, census specialist at Therapy Management Corporation.

Skilled Nursing News, 09/23/2026

Spouse of Nursing Home Billionaire Mogul Indicted

The wife of the founder of Life Care Centers of America has been indicted on charges related to neglect of an elderly adult.

Kim Phuong Preston, wife of billionaire Life Care founder Forrest Preston, was indicted by a Tennessee grand jury on one count of neglect of an elderly adult and one count of neglect of a vulnerable adult.

In 2024 a judge granted Preston's son, Aubrey B. Preston, conservatorship over the company, who claimed Kim had funneled millions of dollars' worth of real estate and cash to herself, her sister and brother. Kim's bond is set at \$20,000.

WTVC-TV, 09/18/2026

Chain Fights Arbitration Order Restoring Bonus Program

Monarch Healthcare has asked a Minnesota federal court to throw out a decision forcing it to bring back a longevity bonus program.

The dispute centers on a COVID-era retention program promising employees up to \$100,000 over 10 years of service.

Monarch abruptly scrapped the program in 2024, shifting those funds into general hourly wage increases instead SEIU pushed to bring the bonuses back and Arbitrator Richard Miller sided with the union.

The company argued in recent court filings that the arbitrator overstepped his authority when he ordered Monarch to reinstate the bonuses and pay back affected workers.

McKnight's, 09/22/2026

Briefly in the News

HHS is accelerating efforts to make artificial intelligence an integral part of medical care in the United States, throwing the resources and support of the federal government into projects that deploy A.I. agents to diagnose and prescribe treatments to patients. The multi-front effort has raised concerns among some officials over the past few months that change is moving too quickly, with inadequate evidence of the technology's safety and effectiveness (*The New York Times*).

The White House has dropped a planned executive order that would put control over medical research grants in the hands of political appointees. Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine), a leading critic of the move urged the White House to drop the matter. The administration was planning to create a new board that would control the National Institutes of Health's grantmaking process, with a goal of cutting Harvard's funding (*Politico*).

Kim Kardashian revealed she has esophagitis, an inflammatory condition that may increase the risk of the esophageal cancer that killed her father (*New York Post*).

As a first step toward possible health warnings about cell phones, Wi-Fi, and other technologies, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has asked for public feedback on effects of electromagnetic fields, radiofrequency radiation, and wireless radiation exposure (*Washington Examiner*).

An analysis found there were 30,184,124 new cancer cases diagnosed between 2001 and 2019. The highest number of diagnoses occurred in January 2,660,525 (8.81%), followed by June 2,595,361 diagnoses [8.60%] and October 2,589,327 (8.58%), while the lowest number occurred in December 2,342,132 (7.76%) (*JAMA Network Open*).

According to financial disclosures, health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. accepted \$4 million in book advances and over \$270,000 in gifts over the past year from MAHA-affiliated groups (*New York Times*).