

## IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals  
in 100 Words-or-Less

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### THEY SAID IT

***"It will be a tremendous problem if they eliminate it sooner. It will be a crisis"***

Stephen Hanse, CEO of the New York State Health Facilities Association advocating that federal regulators to leave a managed care matching tax in place for at least two years.

***"He (a federal judge) has made it clear that the rights Congress established through the Medicaid Act and the Nursing Home Reform Act are critically important rights, and Texas has systematically violated those rights"***

Steven Schwartz, special counsel from the Center for Public Representation, lauding a judge's ruling that Texas has illegally housed MRDD people in nursing homes

***"The presentation included a firehose of cherry-picked data without any context and clear anti-vaccine bias"***

from an Evidence Collective statement following a presentation to ACIP regarding the use of thimerosal as a preservative in vaccines

### First He Was 'fer' It Now He Is 'again' It

After voting for Medicaid cuts earlier this month as part of the recently passed budget reconciliation bill, Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) on Tuesday introduced legislation to repeal changes that took funding from state plans.

An article in HuffPost.com noted that rural hospitals would bear the brunt of cuts to Medicaid, most of which are scheduled to begin in 2028.

"I want to see Medicaid reductions stopped and rural hospitals fully funded permanently," Hawley said. "President Trump has always said we have to protect Medicaid for working people."

"The 'big, beautiful bill' cuts about \$1 trillion from Medicaid over a decade.

Sen. Josh Hawley news release, 07/16/2025

### Deadly Assisted Living Fire in Massachusetts

Nine people were killed and dozens hurt after a five-alarm fire tore through Gabriel House, an ALF in Fall River, Massachusetts. Gabriel House is home to about 70 people.

About 12 non-ambulatory residents were physically carried out by police officers.

Thirty people, including five firefighters, were taken to local hospitals. One person is in critical condition. The five firefighters have already been released.

Two residents told AP staff members fled the building without telling residents about the fire. Another resident said first responder came to his room and told him to evacuate.

ABC News, 07/15/2025

### Fire Fighters' Union Says Understaffing Cost Lives

Union leaders are calling out what they say is a long-standing failure to adequately staff the Fall River fire department.

"What happened last night was not only a tragedy for the city of Fall River, it was a travesty," said Edward Kelly, general president of the International Association of Fire Fighters. "Had the Fall River Fire Department been staffed to national standards, lives would have been saved."

Kelly said only two of the department's 10 fire companies are staffed with the national standard of four firefighters. He said the remaining eight operate with just three.

ABC News, 07/15/2025

### Providers Trying to Avert Tax Wind-Down Losses

Nursing home advocates are pressing for a commitment from federal regulators to leave a managed care matching tax in place for at least two years.

Late changes to the "big, beautiful bill" signed into law July 4 mean that a tax on managed care organizations that brings hundreds of millions of dollars of funding to nursing homes is slated for extinction.

Billions of dollars are at risk in other states around the country.

The question is whether CMS Administrator Mehmet Oz, will pull the plug on the cash flow immediately or allow the full three-year wind-down period authorized by Congress.

McKnight's, 07/15/2025

### Another Reprieve in CMS' Revalidation Initiative

Providers were down to the final two weeks before the August 1 deadline for completion of revalidation forms, but now for the third time CMS has extended the deadline.

The new deadline is January 1, 2026.

CMS requires every federally funded facility to complete an updated revalidation form listing ownership and management details and naming anyone who could have a controlling interest in a nursing home's operations – down to the vendor and volunteer levels.

Providers who do not submit complete information in Form 885A – or fail to do so at all – risk losing their Medicare certification.

McKnight's, 07/17/2025

**CMS has a help desk for  
revalidation questions**  
[SNFDisclosures@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:SNFDisclosures@cms.hhs.gov)

### Genesis Bankruptcy Puts Major ACO in Jeopardy

LTC ACO represents more than 30,000 Medicare beneficiaries and is one of — if not the — largest ACOs to include skilled nursing patients.

The organization contracts with more than 2,000 physicians and nurse practitioners and has about 2,000 SNFs in its national network.

The ACO is controlled by Genesis, whose spending is being tightly controlled under the recent bankruptcy declaration.

An attorney for Genesis, noted that 84% of participants who would be paid shared savings through the program are independent of Genesis.

McKnight's, 07/16/2025

## **IN THE TRENCHES – COVID-19 & Other Outbreaks in the U.S. and the World**

**THE WORLD:** The conventional, "first-generation" mRNA vaccine was globally distributed to hundreds of millions of people to decrease COVID-19 prevalence, further advanced constructs have been pursued by researchers and pharmaceutical manufacturers. The key feature of the "second-generation" mRNA vaccine is a self-amplifying replicon that may allow a low dose to ensure durable immunogenicity, i.e. the ability of a foreign substance to provoke an immune response in the body (*National Library of Medicine*).

**AMERICA:** Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought told reporters after meeting with Senate Republicans on Tuesday that the White House is on board with a substitute amendment to the rescissions package that would exempt PEPFAR, the global anti-AIDS initiative from cuts. Vought said that the president could accept the substitute amendment to exempt the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, an initiative George W. Bush launched in 2003, from rescissions (*The Hill*).

**THE WORLD:** The recent rise of rapid at-home tests has made it easier to find out if you have a serious illness like COVID-19 or just a touch of spring allergies. But while quick and convenient, these at-home tests are less sensitive than those available at the doctor's office. A solution may come in the form of a new, low-cost biosensing technology that could make rapid at-home tests up to 100 times more sensitive to viruses like COVID-19. The diagnostic could expand rapid screening to other life-threatening conditions like prostate cancer and sepsis, as well (*UC Berkley News*).

**CANADA:** The fate of nearly 400 Canadian ostriches, which Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is trying to save, now rests with federal justices in Ottawa. As the controversial case makes its way through court, members of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, right-wing influencers and a Republican megadonor are urging the Liberal government to spare the ostriches that were exposed to bird flu (*Politico*).

**CAPITOL HILL:** A former Pfizer scientist denied an allegation made by House Republicans that he conspired to delay the release of Covid shot data to hurt Donald Trump's 2020 election prospects, the latest twist in a dispute that demonstrates how vaccines are increasingly becoming a political flashpoint. Philip Dormitzer, a former top official at Pfizer, said the idea that he and his colleagues sought to prevent Trump from winning reelection is a "false conspiracy theory" (*Bloomberg*).

**VARIOUS STATES:** A second case of measles has been confirmed in Wyoming. The Wyoming Department of Health said the source of exposure for the unvaccinated child is unknown. Three other states have reported new measles cases over the past few days, including Kansas, North Dakota and New Jersey. Kansas has four more cases, all linked to an outbreak in the southwestern part of the state (*Wyoming Public Radio, CIDRAP*).

**AMERICA:** With some exceptions, US adults could safely forego tetanus and diphtheria booster vaccination—if uptake of childhood vaccines stays high. Discontinuing the 10-year doses could save about \$1 billion each year, said researchers, from Oregon Health & Science University, who compared the impact of the tetanus and diphtheria vaccination programs to that of other routine childhood vaccines (*Clinical Microbiology Reviews*).

**INDIA:** Tests have identified Nipah virus in two patients from India's Kerala state, one of them an 18-year-old woman who died from her infection after treatment in a hospital. A second Nipah infection was reported in a 38-year-old woman. The Nipah virus is fatal to 50% to 75% of its victims. Authorities conducted enhanced surveillance in 20 wards in the district to enhance awareness and identify a potential source of the first infection. No other illnesses were found (*VarthaBharati*).

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Amid concerns that the federal government is

undermining science-based vaccine policies; Governor Maura Healey wants to give the state Department of Public Health more authority to recommend vaccines. It's a shift worth pursuing, both to maintain public trust in vaccines and to ensure a consistent supply of childhood vaccines, should shifting federal government policies imperil the availability of some shots (*The Boston Globe*).

**FLORIDA:** Among 11 confirmed cases, four people in Florida have died this year from *Vibrio vulnificus*, a rare flesh-eating bacterium found in warm, brackish seawater. That number is down from 2024, when infections peaked with 82 cases and 19 deaths. Health officials linked that spike to Hurricane Helene. Since 2016, Florida has recorded 448 cases and 100 deaths tied to the bacteria (*CBS News*).

**CALIFORNIA:** COVID-19 is again on the rise in California, likely marking the beginning of an anticipated summer wave. The CDC estimated infections are now increasing in about half of U.S. states. The agency's latest update pointed to rising activity across more than two dozen states in the Southeast, South and along the West Coast (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

**UTAH:** The Utah Department of Health and Human Services announced that an independent testing program has detected measles in wastewater samples collected on July 7 from the Provo area, suggesting that at least one person in the area was sick recently and serving as a warning that residents should take precautions. So far, the state's number of measles cases remains at nine (*CIDRAP*).

### **COVID-19, 07/17/2025**

**World Total Cases**  
778,365,795

**World Total Deaths**  
7,098,155

**U.S. Total Deaths**  
1,225,181

World Health Organization

## **Congressional Bill Would Bolster Nursing Workforce**

The National Nursing Workforce Center Act to address the nationwide nursing shortage was introduced in the U.S. House this week.

The bipartisan bill would create a two-year pilot program through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to help states establish or expand nursing workforce centers; and direct HRSA to create a national center focused on nursing workforce research and solutions.

Support research, planning, and programs that address nursing shortages and strengthen nursing education.

The bill is co-sponsored by U.S. Reps. Young Kim (CA), Marilyn Strickland (WA), Don Bacon (NE), and Sarah McBride (DE).

U.S. Rep. Young Kim news release, 07/15/2025

## **PA Caregivers Sound a Worsening Workforce Alarm**

At a time when the state's working-age population is shrinking and its retired population is growing larger, Pennsylvania could soon see the number of those in need of care outnumber those available to care for them.

In a recent survey nursing home providers have reported a bevy of issues as a result of workforce shortages: 53% of respondents said they had to limit or cap admissions; 38% said they had to defer facility upgrades as a result; and another 24% said they are putting admission referrals on wait lists.

Further, 112,000 home care shifts are unfilled each month.

City & State Pennsylvania, 05/27/2025

## **Behavioral Health Provider Pays to Settle HIPAA Case**

Deer Oaks—The Behavioral Health Solution, a major provider of behavioral health services to US nursing homes has agreed to pay \$225,000 to settle allegations it failed to adequately protect private patient information.

HHS said the company first came on its radar in 2023, when an individual

complained that Deer Oak disclosed the electronic protected health information of patients — including names, dates of birth, identification numbers and diagnoses — by making discharge summaries publicly accessible online.

The Texas-based firm bills itself as the largest such company in the US, with some 1,500 partner facilities.

McKnight's, 07/14/2025

## **Hospital-To-Home Transitions Fail Seniors with Dementia**

Hospital-to-home transitions for older adults with dementia and multiple chronic conditions face major challenges due to systemic healthcare gaps.

A study that analyzed 70 investigations found that healthcare professionals, including geriatric specialists, frequently lack adequate dementia training.

The knowledge gap affects providers' ability to identify and diagnose dementia, which the review links to poor discharge planning and higher readmission risk. The review found that limited dementia knowledge made it difficult for many providers to create a hospital-to-home care plan or manage co-existing conditions.

BMC Geriatrics, July 2025

## **Lose Weight, Control DM & Lower Rate of Alzheimer's**

A study involving nearly 1.7 million patients suggests that *semaglutide* — a drug that lowers blood sugar and aids weight loss — could significantly cut dementia risk in older adults with type 2 diabetes.

*Semaglutide* is the active ingredient in the medications Wegovy and Ozempic.

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University analyzed three years of electronic health records and found that patients on *semaglutide* had lower rates of Alzheimer's-related dementia than those taking other diabetes drugs.

The drop in risk was sizeable: 46% lower than insulin, 33% lower than metformin, and 20% lower than earlier GLP-1 drugs.

McKnight's, 06/24/2025

## **ONE COLUMN**

### **Vax, Health Advocates Warn Of Fallout from ACIP Meeting**

In the wake of the recent meeting of a newly reconstituted federal vaccine advisory board — the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) public health, medical, and infectious disease experts are not holding back in their reaction to the panel's new direction, which they fear will only serve to further undermine public confidence in vaccines.

The meeting was one of the most unprecedented in the group's 60-year history. Two weeks prior Secretary Kennedy fired the board's 17 standing members and replaced them with eight new members with little expertise in vaccinology and immunology, including some who are vaccine critics.

The meeting was marked by a controversial vote to recommend that all Americans receive flu vaccines only in single doses that don't contain the preservative *thimerosal*, which has long been a target of vaccine critics, including HHS Sec. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

That vote came after a presentation on *thimerosal* that many observers say was filled with inaccuracies and long-debunked talking points.

"Re-examining the childhood vaccine schedule and the use of *thimerosal* are both politically motivated actions that are not based on science," Infectious Diseases Society of America President Tina Tan, MD, said in a statement following the meeting's conclusion.

In another move that sparked concern, a draft agenda released a week ahead of the 2-day meeting, which was held at CDC headquarters in Atlanta, included two new presentation topics— the aforementioned *thimerosal* as a vaccine ingredient, and the use of the combined measles, mumps, rubella and varicella vaccine in children under 5.

The changes to ACIP prompted the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to boycott the meeting, which it typically attends as a liaison member.

CIDRAP, 07/09/2025

## **AARP Launches New Nursing Home Dashboard**

A new AARP dashboard, an outgrowth of its Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard, features virus, staffing and quality measures from three federal data sites.

The new platform captures expanded data on respiratory virus rates from the CDC and combines them with state-level and provider-level data on staffing and quality measures.

AARP said it would use the dashboard to produce quarterly findings and state fact sheets intended for consumers. The website also includes a series of maps that let users compare performance state-by-state.

Consumers, for instance, can easily check how their state's average hourly facility staffing totals per day stack up.

AARP, 07/08/2025

### **The New AARP Dashboard's Findings**

Some of the findings from the new AARP dashboard include:

Over the last 3 months, nursing homes provided an average of 3.9 nursing hours per resident per day, including 0.7 RN hours, 0.9 LPN hours and 2.3 nurse aide hours per resident per day," AARP reported.

Nationally, facility nursing staff averaged 48% turnover over the last year, with a high of 61% in Vermont and a low of 33% in Hawaii.

Approximately 15% of long-stay nursing home residents and 1.6% of short stay residents received an antipsychotic medication.

AARP, 07/08/20254

### **SNF-Union Collaboration Boosts Salaries and Bennies**

A new labor-industry partnership in Pennsylvania has delivered its first collective bargaining agreement, one that will bring more than 2,500 workers additional wages of \$120 million over the next two years.

The contract announced Wednesday will pay more for worker wages, retirement benefits and training at 27 facilities.

The Pennsylvania Health Care Association and SEIU Healthcare PA alliance praised the agreement. It involves facilities run by Saber Healthcare, WeCare, Kadima Healthcare and Focus.

An "overwhelming" 90% of union members at nearly 30 facilities voted to approve the contract terms over the last three weeks.

McKnight's, 07/16/2025

### **Testing Issues Strain Long-Term Care System**

The Pennsylvania House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee is examining how systemic barriers are deterring individuals from entering the long-term care field amid a persistent workforce shortage.

One major concern raised during a recent hearing was the state's contracted testing vendor, Credentia, which provides required exams for nurse aides. The Florida-based company has faced widespread criticism for scheduling difficulties, especially in rural areas, as well as day-of test cancellations and communication failures.

In response, state agencies issued a corrective action plan, with Credentia expected to address the issues by the end of June.

Franklin County Free Press

### **"Password Spraying," i.e. Hacked by Another Computer**

Attackers get lists of usernames from public directories or data leaks that have already happened. They then use the same passwords to try to log in to all of these accounts.

Usually, the process is automated so that it can quickly try all possible pairs of username and password. Password spraying has become popular among hackers, even those working for the government.

Because it is so easy to do and works so well to get around security measures, it is a major threat to both personal and business data security.

Virtual Data Works, June 2025

## **Briefly in the News**

HHS Secretary Bobby Kennedy Jr. on Monday refuted the existence of Medicaid cuts due to President Trump's "big, beautiful bill." "First of all, there's no cuts on Medicaid. There is a — there's a diminishment of the growth rate of Medicaid, which is bankrupting our country," Kennedy told Fox Business Network's Larry Kudlow on his show. "And by the way, the national debt is also a determinant, a social determinant, of health" (*The Hill*).

Researchers found that in 2017, among more than 4.5 million visits to an ED by patients over 65, 12% were there longer than eight hours. In 2024, that jumped to 20% of more than 12 million visits. It was even worse in academic hospitals, rising from 19% of visits in 2017 to 30% in 2024. (*JAMA Internal Medicine*).

Federal funding will continue for three key programs - the National Program of Cancer Registries, the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, and the National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. Together, the programs help states collect detailed information on cancer cases and improve prevention efforts and cancer screening, particularly among people who are uninsured (*Stat*).

The Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, unveiled the Functional Repair of Neocortical Tissue (FRONT) program, which aims to restore brain function using regenerative medicine approaches for people suffering from conditions such as stroke TBI and Alzheimer's. The program specifically targets damage to the neocortex, the brain's largest region responsible for sensory perception, motor control and decision-making (*McKnight's Clinical Daily News*).

The NY budget includes \$34 billion for Medicaid, including a total of \$1 billion to increase reimbursement rates for ALFs (\$7.5 million), nursing homes (\$233 million). LeadingAge New York, however, issued a statement calling the budget bill "profoundly disappointing," particularly for the state's nursing homes (*Senior Living*).