

IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals
in 100 Words-or-Less

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THEY SAID IT

"States that have expanded Medicaid eligibility are going to get [hit] much worse than states that did not" Frank Fuller director at Evans Senior Investments

"After a pause because of the pandemic, there's more pressure and scrutiny. They're catching up with what was already in place. They're really scrutinizing coding on the MDS" Alicia Cantinieri, Zimmet Healthcare's Director of Clinical Reimbursement & Regulatory Compliance for Healthcare

"This temporary pause allows CMS to validate data integrity and verify that publicly reported information meets CMS quality standards before resuming updates" CMS, in a Quality and Safety Special Alert sent to nursing home providers after the agency froze Care Compare

Evidence of the Oldest Nursing Home Found

Archaeologists from the University of Haifa have unearthed a 1,600-year-old mosaic with a Greek inscription reading, "Peace on the elders," that may be the earliest evidence of a dedicated institution for the elderly.

The discovery was made at the Sussita (Hippos) National Park near the Sea of Galilee, the primary Christian city in the region during the Byzantine period.

The discovery is significant because while historical texts from the fifth and sixth centuries mention such institutions, this is the first time a clear, physical artifact has been found that can be directly linked to them.

The Jerusalem Post, 08/18/2025

It's Begun – Shortages From Gov't Crackdown

About 1.1 million health care workers are foreign-born, non-citizens who are at very high risk of being deported by the Trump administration. That's going to cause severe worker shortages, particularly in nursing homes and home care.

U.S. Census data shows more than half of home care workers in the Chicago metro area are not U.S. citizens.

In Chicago, 65% of the 24,000 people who worked for home care agencies in 2024 were not citizens.

Agencies have started reporting issues with immigrant employees not showing up for work out of fear of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, raids.

McKnight's, 08/15/2025

Less Fed Money = Fewer State Dollars for Providers

A decade ago, annual state reimbursement increases of 1% to 2% were standard, but more recent increases have been as high as 25%.

That may come to a halt – though not necessarily a screeching one – as various measures included in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act begin to come into play.

Those cuts take effect in 2028 with a three- to five-year phase-in.

About \$1 trillion in Medicaid cuts in the bill will come primarily from the rollback of eligibility from the Affordable Care Act, as well as introducing work requirements for non-disabled recipients.

McKnight's, 08/14/2025

Feds Eying Assessments With More Vigor Than Ever

The current climate was shaped by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the US, which came just five months after the start of the Patient Driven Payment Model.

regulators are leaning more heavily on F-Tag 641, which deals with accuracy of assessments. And a pattern is considered just three inaccuracies.

After a pause because of the pandemic, there's more pressure and scrutiny. They're scrutinizing coding on the MDS and PBJ. In the near future, they will be auditing procedures for the QRP and value-based purchasing, which circles back to accurate assessments.

McKnight's, 08/13/2025

Sexual Abuse Triggers Fine for Nursing Home

An Iowa nursing home has been fined \$325 for failing to protect residents of the home from sexual abuse in the form of recurring "sexual advances" made by a female resident.

Staff at Bethany Life Care Center in Story City found the woman lying in bed with her pants and underwear around her knees and a male resident of the home lying on top of her with his pants around his knees.

A review of records at the home indicated the woman had a history of being "overly friendly," and was at times inappropriate, with men in her unit.

Iowa Capital Dispatch, 08/07/2025

HCA to Pay \$1.53 M for Illegal Training Repayment

HCA Healthcare and Health Trust Workforce Solutions, (together, HCA), has resolved allegations that HCA unlawfully required entry-level nurse employees to repay the cost of a mandatory training program if they did not remain employed with the company for two years.

The settlement is the result of a years-long investigation by Attorneys General in California, Colorado and Nevada, working in partnership with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

The states' investigation found that HCA violated state and federal laws by using training repayment agreement provisions (TRAPs) in nurses' employment contracts.

HCA will pay a total of \$1.53 million to resolve the claims.

California Attorney General, news release, 08/12/2025

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

THE WORLD: At least a dozen countries are interested in developing their own vaccines because they're losing confidence that the US government will have immunizations ready for the next pandemic. A top biotech investor said other nations have largely depended on the US to make shots that are deployed globally. The Covid-19 vaccines, developed by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc. and embraced by the US government, were used by tens of millions of people around the world. (*Bloomberg*).

ILLINOIS: Allowing staff to work while symptomatic with COVID-19 put residents "in immediate jeopardy" and led to an upheld civil monetary penalty of \$202,000 for Toulon Rehabilitation & Health Care Center in Illinois. An HHS Departmental Appeals Board decision left that finding intact Thursday. The facility had enacted thorough COVID-19 infection control policies, but a 2020, infection control survey found that they were not implemented "effectively," putting the SNF's 76 residents in danger (*McKnight's*).

THE WORLD: In most cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, a rare condition that can occur after a COVID infection, kids present with gastrointestinal symptoms. In a small placebo-controlled trial, the proportion of patients who achieved gastrointestinal symptom recovery at days 7 and 14 was significantly greater with the novel drug *larazotide* added to standard treatment. *Larazotide* may help prevent inflammatory spike protein antigens from escaping the gastrointestinal tract and reaching the bloodstream (*MedPage Today*).

WASHINGTON, D.C: FDA Commissioner Marty Makary again promoted a conspiracy theory about the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, accusing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) of funding the lab that created the virus. Makary, when asked by NewsNation's Connell McShane about the longevity of the Trump administration's changes to federal health agencies such as the FDA, blasted the previous NIH leadership while floating the theory (*The Hill*).

U.K., U.S: Disorders of gut-brain interaction, e.g. irritable bowel syndrome, rose significantly in both the U.S. and the U.K. following the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a population-based survey study. Surveys revealed that the proportion of adults meeting criteria for at least one such disorder increased from 38.3% in 2017 to 42.6% in 2023 (OR 1.20, 95% CI 1.09-1.31), Imran Aziz, MD, of the University of Sheffield in England, and colleagues reported in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* (*MedPage Today*).

MASSACHUSETTS: Moderna is cutting about 10% of its workforce, part of an effort by the struggling biotech company to reduce spending as sales of its Covid vaccine decline. In a note to employees, Chief Executive Officer Stéphane Bancel said the company was "aligning our cost structure to the realities of our business" (*Bloomberg*).

THE WORLD: Adding a novel oral drug originally designed to treat celiac disease to standard treatment for post-COVID multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) appeared safe and effective in a small trial. Among 11 patients with MIS-C, a larger proportion of those randomized to larazotide achieved 90% or greater gastrointestinal symptom recovery compared with placebo at days 7 and 14 of treatment (*MedPage Today*).

WASHINGTON, D.C: HHS has reinstated of the Task Force on Safer Childhood Vaccines, a federal panel created by Congress to improve the safety, quality, and oversight of vaccines administered to American children. The Task Force is represented by senior leadership from NIH, the Food and Drug Administration, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The NIH Director will serve as Chairman of the Task Force. The original Task Force was disbanded in 1998 (*Dailyfly*).

NEW ENGLAND: There has been a significant increase of Babesiosis in New England since the 1980s, and the authors of a study said warming trends in the region may lead to accelerating tick life cycles and increasing tick activity outside

of the traditional summer months. Babesiosis is parasitic disease primarily spread by blacklegged (deer) ticks, which infects red blood cells (*Open Forum Infectious Diseases*).

JERUSALEM: In a potential game-changer for how we treat the flu, scientists from Hebrew University of Jerusalem have unveiled a new drug pairing that outperforms Tamiflu—the most widely used anti-influenza medication—against even the deadliest flu strains, including bird (avian) and swine flu. The surprising duo? One of them is *theobromine*, a compound found in chocolate (*National Academy of Sciences*).

AMERICA: The threat of rabies is becoming greater in the U.S. Nassau County in Long Island, N.Y., declared a public health threat due to the spread of rabies in wild animals, with 25 confirmed cases in the past year. Nearby Suffolk County also reported the first two cases of rabies since 2009. In April, a Michigan resident died from rabies contracted after a transplant, and in November of last year, a California woman died after being bitten by a bat (*The Hill*).

WYOMING: Health officials are working to alert hundreds of people in dozens of states who may have been exposed to rabies in bat-infested cabins in Grand Teton National Park over the past few months. none of the bats found in some of the eight linked cabins at Jackson Lake Lodge had tested positive for rabies. But the handful of dead bats sent to a lab were probably only a small sample of the likely dozens that colonized the attic above the row of cabins (*Wyoming Public Radio*).

COVID-19, 08/21/2025

World Total Cases
778,474,217

World Total Deaths
7,099,716

U.S. Total Deaths
1,226,130

World Health Organization

Judge Upholds CMP For Early COVID Lapses

An HHS administrative law judge upheld a \$111,510 penalty for a Maryland SNF that did not comply with COVID-19 laboratory and infection control regulatory requirements in the early days of the pandemic.

Sagepoint Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (now Green Acres Nursing and Rehab) was assessed daily CMPs of \$15,930 for the week ending May 5, 2020, for violations including infection prevention and control – severity level L and laboratory services severity level J.

The judge found the facility did not isolate residents, track lab results and had an inefficient process for distributing test results.

McKnight's, 08/22/2025

PACS Seeks Relief from Landlord, Lenders – Prez Out

PJ Sanford, president of PACS Group, resigned 8/15/2025 as the massive skilled nursing operator (314 facilities) acknowledged it had entered into forbearance agreements to temporarily reduce payments to its lenders and landlord Omega Healthcare Investors.

It's the first public sign that PACS may be looking for major relief from its real estate partners.

Irregularities in financial reporting over several periods, triggered a default of both a credit agreement and a master lease with Omega.

PACS announced it would miss another filing deadline - for the second quarter of 2025. The company hasn't filed a SEC quarterly report since last August.

McKnight's, 08/17/2025

Former Children's Hospital Doc Charged with Child Porn

A former doctor who once worked as a geneticist and dysmorphologist at Cincinnati Children's Hospital has been arrested on child pornography charges.

Howard Saal, 73, of Cincinnati, is charged with transporting and possessing child pornography.

Local and federal authorities received a tip regarding image searches for child pornography that originated from Saal's IP address.

FBI investigators reviewed Saal's electronic devices and found more than 153,000 images and 470 videos involving child pornography. Some of the victims reportedly are as young as a newborn.

U.S. Attorney, Southern District Ohio
news release, 08/13/2025

Data Breach Exposes Files of 56K SNF Residents

Fundamental Administrative Services acknowledged late last week that personal information of residents at 87 skilled nursing facilities it serves may have been hacked.

Fundamental said that in late January of this year it became aware of "suspicious activity related to its computer network." An internal investigation determined that between Oct. 27, 2024, and Jan. 13, 2025, an "unauthorized actor" copied files from the company's network.

Hacked files may have included name, Social Security number, driver's license or state identification number, financial account information, date of birth, medical treatment information, health insurance policy number, and/or Medicare/Medicaid plan name.

HIPAA Journal, 08/20/2025

First FDA-Cleared Blood Test For Alzheimer's Disease

Labcorp announced the availability of the Lumipulse® pTau-217/Beta Amyloid 42 Ratio, the first blood-based in-vitro diagnostic test cleared by the FDA to aid in the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease through early detection of the amyloid plaques associated with the disease.

Results are comparable to existing methods that support a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease – cerebrospinal fluid testing obtained through lumbar puncture and PET scans – but from a simple blood draw, making it more affordable, more accessible and less invasive.

Developed by Fujirebio Diagnostics the test demonstrated a positive predictive value of 92% and a negative predictive value of 97%.

Labcorp news release, 08/18/2025

ONE COLUMN

Big Beautiful Bill Could Become Big & Ugly for M'Care

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office reported the federal budget deficits caused by President Donald Trump's tax and spending law could trigger automatic cuts to Medicare if Congress does not act.

The CBO estimates that Medicare could potentially see as much as \$491 billion in cuts from 2027 to 2034 if Congress does not act to mitigate a 2010 law that forces across-the-board cuts to many federal programs once legislation increases the federal deficit.

The latest report from CBO showed how Trump's signature tax and spending law could put new pressure on federal programs that are bedrocks of the American social safety net.

Democrats, who requested the analysis from CBO, jumped on the potential cuts. "Republicans knew their tax breaks for billionaires would force over half a trillion dollars in Medicare cuts — and they did it anyway," said Rep. Brendan F. Boyle, the top Democrat on the House Budget Committee.

Trump and Republicans pledged not to cut Medicare as part of the legislation, but the estimated \$3.4 trillion that the law adds to the federal deficit over the next decade means that many Medicare programs could still see cuts.

In the past, Congress has always acted to mitigate cuts to Medicare and other programs, but it would take some bipartisan cooperation to do so.

Hospitals in rural parts of the country are already grappling with cuts to Medicaid, which is available to people with low incomes, and cuts to Medicare could exacerbate their shortfalls.

As Republicans muscled the bill through Congress and are now selling it to voters back home, they have been highly critical of how CBO has analyzed the bill. They have also argued that the tax cuts will spur economic growth and pointed to \$50 billion in funding for rural hospitals that was included in the package.

Associated Press, 08/15/2025

Long-term Care = 1/3 of All Healthcare Bankruptcies

Gibbins Advisors predicts long-term care organizations will account for a third of the healthcare bankruptcy cases in 2025.

The report looked at independent and assisted living communities, CCRC/ life plan communities, skilled nursing facilities and other types of healthcare-related entities such as pharmaceuticals, clinics and physician practices, hospitals, and medical equipment and supplies.

The senior care sector is on track to have 16 bankruptcies this year, the same number as the pharmaceutical segment. By comparison, eight hospital bankruptcies, four medical equipment and supply, and two clinic/physician practice bankruptcies are expected, along with two "other" bankruptcies.

Senior Living, 08/06/2025

AI to Deny Care? Humana Facing Class Action Suit

A class action lawsuit alleges that Humana's use of artificial intelligence to deny post-acute care to Medicaid Advantage beneficiaries became fraud when those automated decisions replaced the interpretation of clinicians.

A federal judge ruled last week that the plaintiffs did not have to exhaust Medicare administrative appeals before filing their complaint in late 2023.

In March, Humana had asked the court to dismiss those claims, arguing that the District Court had no jurisdiction because two women initially behind the lawsuit didn't ask the Quality Improvement Organizations to review their coverage denials.

McKnight's, 08/18/2025

Nurse Who Wasn't Worked Many SNFs in Many States

Not many authorities in Pennsylvania knew Shannon Nicole Womack was bouncing among nine nursing homes over the past year, despite allegedly lacking the professional license to do so.

After a traffic stop in April it was discovered that Womack had at least 10 aliases and seven Social Security numbers associated with her.

Police say Womack secured nursing positions through staffing agencies, submitting fraudulently signed documents and creating a false LLC to self-deploy herself to multiple jobs.

Womack had been on the "imposter list" in Georgia since 2022 and she had arrest warrants in Tennessee, Indiana and New Jersey.

Pittsburgh Tribune, 07/28/2025

Fake RN Wearing Scrubs At Home When Arrested

Florida woman is charged with impersonating an RN.

Autumn Bardisa, 29, allegedly acted as an advanced nurse technician at AdventHealth Palm Coast, where she was employed for about 18 months, and cared for 4486 patients.

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office reported during the hiring process, she is said to have "passed" the test and provided a license number of a person named Autumn, albeit with a different last name.

Bardisa allegedly told AdventHealth she had recently been married. HR asked her for a marriage license which was never provided. There apparently was no follow up from HR.

Health Exec, 08/17/2025

You Better Get Those Background Checks Done

The HHS-OIG has issued its third 2025 report analyzing state oversight of background checks for nursing home employees, finding mixed results so far on compliance and enforcement.

The latest audit, on Alabama practices, found lax enforcement, resulting in nearly one-third of sampled employees having been improperly hired. OIG said Alabama did not have a process to verifying facilities completed background checks before hiring employees.

Furthermore, the state does not require surveyors to review background check completions as part of standard surveys. Findings in Florida and Louisiana, the other two states investigated, ranged from appropriate oversight (Florida) to requiring improvements (Louisiana).

McKnight's, 08/14/2025

Briefly in the News

CareTrust REIT saw total revenue shoot up 63% and normalized funds from operations per share rise 19% in the second quarter, illustrating a healthy, broader operating atmosphere. In addition, company leaders touted a expanding investment pipeline of \$600 million, which will be focused primarily on US skilled nursing, as well as some assisted living and British properties (**McKnight's**).

Researchers at the University of Vermont have developed a more precise way to assess stroke risk in people with atrial fibrillation (A-Fib), a condition that affects 10.5 million Americans and is a leading cause of stroke. Their findings show that adding simple blood tests to an existing risk calculator can help physicians better determine who truly needs anticoagulant medications (**Journal of Thrombosis and Haemostasis**).

In a recent Gallup poll, the percentage of Americans who report drinking alcohol has hit a 90-year low. Gallup's annual Consumption Habits survey revealed that only 54% of U.S. adults reported drinking alcohol in 2025. This figure represents a three-year decline from 67% in 2022 and falls below the previous record low of 55% in 1958 (**San Francisco Chronicle**).

Credit ratings for nonprofit hospitals and health systems are looking stronger in the first half of 2025, following downgrades in recent years. credit ratings agency Fitch Ratings reported the gap between credit upgrades and downgrades has nearly closed this year, with nine upgrades and eight downgrades from January through June (**Modern Healthcare**).

Real estate investment trust Healthpeak Properties saw record leasing volumes in its CCRC portfolio in the second quarter. Healthpeak's 15-community CCRC portfolio includes nine properties in Florida, two in Pennsylvania and one each in Alabama, Michigan, Texas and Virginia. Annual net operating income from the CCRC portfolio is approximately \$200 (**Senior Living**).