

# IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals  
in 100 Words-or-Less

Edited by Drew Vogel

[drewvogel5255@msn.com](mailto:drewvogel5255@msn.com)

Vol 9

08/31/2025

## THEY SAID IT

*"We need a continuum of engagement, not a continuum of care. How do we enable you to stay engaged and put life into your years? That's what we want to be offering"* Bob Kramer, founder of Nexus Insights

*"This is an existential threat because we haven't had an increase since 2020"* Robert Vande Merwe, executive director of the Idaho Health Care Association after the state announced a 4% cut in reimbursement

*"When CDC Director Susan Monarez refused to rubber-stamp unscientific, reckless directives and fire dedicated health experts, she chose protecting the public over serving a political agenda. For that, she has been targeted"* Statement from Monarez' lawyers after her departure from CMS after less than a month on

## Staffing Rule is Alive, If Not Very Well

The federal staffing mandate for all US nursing homes lives on in two separate courts, thanks to fresh appeals by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Federal judges in Texas and Iowa this spring rejected provisions of the CMS rule requiring 24/7 registered nurse coverage and daily nurse staffing minimums.

July 1 Congress voted to delay possible enforcement of the rule until fall 2034, saving an estimated \$22 billion as part of a much broader reconciliation bill.

But HHS has advanced an existing appeal and filed another keeping their legal fight for the 2024 staffing rule very much alive.

McKnight's, 08/28/2025

## CMS Director Out – She Lasted Less than a Month

Susan Monarez is no longer director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The director of the nation's top public health agency is out after less than one month in the job, and several top agency leaders have also resigned.

Officials did not explain why Susan Monarez was no longer with the agency, but her lawyers said she was targeted for standing up for science.

On Wednesday evening, her lawyers Mark Zaid and Abbe David Lowell issued a statement that said she had neither resigned nor been told she was fired.

Associated Press, 08/27/2025

## Memory Care Facility Cleared of COVID-Era Charges

An appeals court upheld a lower court ruling dismissing charges against California's Silverado Senior Living related to 14 deaths that occurred early in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The memory care provider said the findings "fully vindicated" the company, its leadership and its staff.

A three-judge panel affirmed a trial court's previous ruling and dismissal order, ruling statements made by the administrator protected under the Fifth Amendment.

The company, its leadership and the administrator of the facility were charged in 2023 with elder endangerment and five felony counts of violation causing death.

Senior Living, 08/26/2025

## SNF to Pay Millions to Settle Fraud, Understaffing Issues

A NY nursing home will pay \$12 million to resolve allegations that its owners defrauded Medicaid and understaffed to the point of neglect, leading to unsafe conditions, hospitalizations and resident deaths.

Most of the money will go toward improving resident care and staffing at Van Duyn Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing in Syracuse.

AG Letitia James said an investigation found that owners/operators Efraim Steif and Uri Koenig personally took millions of dollars in taxpayer funds meant for resident care.

An independent health care monitor and an independent financial monitor will also oversee efforts to improve clinical and financial operations.

McKnight's, 08/26/2025

## Most SNFs Say MA Plans Deny Necessary Care

Two-thirds of nursing homes see Medicare Advantage plans deny or delay patients' medically necessary post-acute care on a daily and weekly basis.

A recent survey from AHCA found that among 363 skilled nursing providers surveyed, 29% reported daily denials or delays by MA insurers, with another 37% reporting such challenges weekly. For another 17%, denials and delays happen monthly.

Just over two-thirds (67%) said they had encountered an MA plan that pulled coverage for a resident "against medical advice."

The majority of providers also reported initial claims denials are reversed upon appeal "always" (3%) or "sometimes" (54%).

AHCA/NCAL, 08/27/2025

## A Lawsuit Seeks to Halt Privatization of WVa Facilities

Notice of a lawsuit has been made, in an attempt to prevent the sale of the \$60 million sale of a long-term care facility in West Virginia to an out-of-state development group.

A letter of intent to file civil action was sent to Gov. Patrick Morrisey from Garcia Law on behalf of a resident at the John Manchin Senior Health Care Center in Fairmont.

At the time he announced the sale, Morrisey said each of three state-operated facilities have operated at a loss and the state was faced with investing \$100 million in long-term operating costs.

WCHS-TV, 08/26/2025

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

**AMERICA:** Nearly 6 in 10 vaccine-eligible US children hospitalized for COVID-19 from 2022 to 2024 had at least one underlying medical condition. Less than 4% were current with their vaccinations. A team analyzed data from the COVID-19–Associated Hospitalization Surveillance Network from October 2022 to April 2024 on children ages 6 months to 17 years admitted to more than 275 hospitals in 12 states (*Pediatrics*).

**IRELAND:** Over one third (36%) of Irish healthcare workers reported a symptomatic respiratory illness in 2024 and 2025. About 63% (63% of the 36%) saying they tested for COVID-19, and only 37% and 22% reporting receipt of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 vaccines, respectively (*CIDRAP*).

**AMERICA:** The American College of Cardiology released vaccination recommendations for adults with cardiovascular disease, urging immunization against COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), pneumonia, and shingles. The guidelines, also provide detailed evidence for each vaccine recommendation and answers to frequently asked questions for patients and clinicians to discuss as part of a standard prevention and treatment plan (*Journal of the American College of Cardiology*).

**THE WORLD:** Researchers found that vitamin D insufficiency and deficiency were associated with slightly lower odds of COVID-19 infection. There was variance by race and ethnicity, with Asian and Black participants having higher odds of COVID-19 infection with vitamin D deficiency, while vitamin D insufficiency in White participants was associated with slightly lower odds of COVID-19 infection. Both vitamin D insufficiency were associated with higher odds of COVID-19 hospitalization (*PLOS ONE*).

**CALIFORNIA:** A team led by researchers at UCLA found that long COVID has been observed clinically for 5 years, but no standard definition exists, meaning wide variations exist in the literature, adding to confusion and a lack of clinical consensus. The authors say that, absent a standard definition, the

condition will continue to be both under- and over-recognized by both patients and clinicians (*JAMA Network Open*).

**ATLANTA:** Authorities confirmed the man who opened fire at the CDC headquarters in Atlanta last died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound and was motivated by his distrust of Covid vaccines. Documents recovered from the home of the suspect — identified as Patrick Joseph White — “expressed the shooter’s discontent with the Covid-19 vaccinations.” It was unclear whether White himself had been vaccinated against the virus (*Politico*).

**CALIFORNIA:** Los Angeles County recorded the highest COVID levels in its wastewater since February. The spike, thanks to the new highly contagious “Stratus” variant, comes as students across California return to the classroom, now without a CDC recommendation that they receive updated COVID shots. That change in policy, pushed by HHS Sec. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has been criticized by many public health experts (*Los Angeles Times*).

**ATLANTA:** The federal committee that would recommend the updated coronavirus vaccine is not expected to meet until at least mid-September, according to industry employees and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to share sensitive information. By that point, the summer COVID wave could be over, but Americans could still get a boost of immunity ahead of an expected winter wave (*The Washington Post*).

**AMERICA:** The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) reported more than 10,000 cases, 18 of them fatal, have been reported across 10 countries in the Americas this year, with the pace of infections 34 times higher than a year ago, urging countries to step up their vaccination, surveillance, and outbreak responses. PAHO said the outbreaks are mainly linked to low vaccination coverage, with 89% of cases occurring in people who are unvaccinated or have unknown vaccination status (*CIDRAP*).

**WYOMING:** Health officials are working to alert hundreds of people in dozens of states and several countries who may have been exposed to rabies in bat-infested cabins in Wyoming’s Grand Teton National Park over the past few months. As of Friday, 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 found and sent to the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory in Laramie for testing were probably only a small sample of the likely dozens that colonized the attic above the row of cabins (*AP*).

**ALABAMA:** The Department of Public Health (ADPH) announced the state’s first measles case this year, which marks its first case in 23 years. The patient is an unvaccinated child in North Alabama who is younger than 5 years old and likely contracted the virus during international travel. The child had not attended daycares or school, and medical facilities that evaluated and treated the child have been notified (*CIDRAP*).

**UTAH:** Health officials reported two more measles cases, raising the state’s official total to 13. The latest cases involve school-age children who were unvaccinated. Parents of students at Water Canyon Elementary School and Water Canyon High School have been notified about potential exposure (*Salt Lake Tribune*).

**IDAHO:** Health officials announced the state’s third recent measles case, which involves an unvaccinated child from Bonner County, located in the state’s far-north panhandle. the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the Panhandle Health District said there are no known links between the new infection and two other recent cases (*IDHW news release*).

### **COVID-19, 08/28/2025**

**World Total Cases**  
778,491,932

**World Total Deaths**  
7,099,904

**U.S. Total Deaths**  
1,226,351

World Health Organization

## **Genesis' Creditors Don't Want to Be Left 'Holding the Bag'**

A large group of creditors with claims against Genesis Healthcare objected to the company's "compressed" bankruptcy timeline and its aim to cancel many of its financial obligations in exchange for \$30 million in immediate funding.

The claimholders committee told a federal judge in Texas that the proposal pushed by Genesis is artificially fast-tracked to benefit the provider and its inside partners, including landlords, and would leave just \$15 million in assets to resolve \$1 billion dollars in external claims.

Genesis, who operates 175 nursing homes in 18 states, filed for bankruptcy in July.

*McKnight's, 08/13/2025*

## **Genesis Sale Plan Gets OK Creditors Not Happy**

A judge has given the greenlight to Genesis HealthCare's expedited plans to reorganize and sell its holdings, potentially to an already heavily invested private equity firm.

The case and the speed with which the one-time skilled nursing juggernaut is seeking relief from decades of legal expenses and other liabilities is raising new questions about private equity involvement in LTC.

Concerns have been expressed both by consumer advocates who fear private equity furthering its grip on Genesis' remaining nursing homes and provider advocates who see regulators clamping down on access to needed capital across the broader industry.

*McKnight's, 08/28/2025*

## **SNFs Lose Ability to Seek Voluntary Family Payments**

Federal regulators have taken a "big jump" in their latest interpretation of third-party financial guarantees, putting limits on contractual language used by nursing homes for decades.

Updates to surveyor guidance don't just prohibit family member or guardian guarantees as a condition of admission; they now prohibit providers from enforcing other voluntary language that has

traditionally helped ensure responsible parties use a resident's assets to pay for care or help apply for Medicaid when those assets run out.

Providers should expect to see surveyors putting admission agreements under the microscope, much as they did with arbitration agreements.

*McKnight's, 08/28/2025*

## **Trump Can Stop Deportation Protections for Thousands**

A federal appeals court has cleared the way for the Trump administration to end temporary deportation protections for more than 60,000 people from Nicaragua, Honduras and Nepal — at least for now.

A lower court last month blocked the Department of Homeland Security from ending Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, for the three countries until at least mid-November.

But on Wednesday, a federal court put that ruling on hold pending appeal. The order — which was issued by a panel of three judges nominated under the Clinton, Bush and first Trump administrations — did not offer a rationale for the decision.

*CBS News, 08/20/2025*

## **SNFs Lose Ability to Seek Voluntary Family Payments**

Federal regulators have taken a "big jump" in their latest interpretation of third-party financial guarantees, putting limits on contractual language used by nursing homes for decades.

Updates to surveyor guidance don't just prohibit family member or guardian guarantees as a condition of admission; they now prohibit providers from enforcing other voluntary language that has traditionally helped ensure responsible parties use a resident's assets to pay for care or help apply for Medicaid when those assets run out.

Providers should expect to see surveyors putting admission agreements under the microscope, much as they did with arbitration agreements.

*McKnight's, 08/28/2025*

## **ONE COLUMN**

### **CMS's Freeze Nursing Home Care Compare Data**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced it is freezing its chief nursing home information source for consumers to ensure data accuracy after behind-the-scenes technical changes.

The broad freeze of all information on Nursing Home Care Compare, including star ratings, is expected to last through September. CMS said new data will be added again with the October refresh, expected Oct. 29.

CMS did refresh data in July, making a significant change in the way it calculates health inspection ratings by removing often-outdated, third-cycle survey scores from ratings.

The move comes weeks after CMS finished migrating its nursing home survey and certification data infrastructure from the decades-old Quality Improvement and Evaluation System to the cloud-based Internet Quality Improvement and Evaluation System, or iQIES.

It's not the first time the agency has frozen data in recent years. Most notably, CMS froze some updates early in the Trump administration, and that followed a months-long freeze of four quality measures to allow for data resets. But the breadth of the freeze, came as a surprise to some.

"This is unprecedented," said Broad River Rehab's Joel VanEaton, a close observer of CMS regulatory changes. "While CMS has frozen other aspects of the 5-star rating system ... I don't remember this ever happening to health inspection data individually before."

The freeze may not be impactful for all providers if it lasts only until October — fewer data points are affected during monthly updates, which are the kinds that were expected in August and September.

Consumers looking for survey information can still find it posted in facilities, use the freedom of Information Act or by contacting the state agency.

*McKnight's, 08/17/2025*

## **BBB Forces Nursing Home Rate Cut in Idaho**

Idaho has become the second state to announce major cuts to Medicaid provider rates ahead of impending federal cuts triggered by the passage last month of the Trump Big Beautiful Bill.

Providers were notified that reimbursement rates will be reduced by 4% across all major healthcare settings, including nursing homes.

The announcement came just two months into a new budget year, with the lower rates going into effect Sept. 1.

Skilled nursing providers in North Carolina are facing a 10% rate cut Oct. 1 as state leaders there grappling with a \$319 million Medicaid shortfall.

*McKnight's, 08/26/2025*

## **Law Protects Residents From Unwarranted Discharge**

Older adults in LTC facilities including nursing homes, will have enhanced protections related to transfers and discharges after a bill was signed into law by Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

Among other things, the bill established notification requirements for residents' significant changes; requires facilities that initiate a discharge to notify the state; prohibits facilities from refusing a resident's return if a physician determines it after for the resident to return.

The new law also provides for fines and requires plans of correction for facilities that, without adequate cause, refuse to readmit a resident following an emergency.

*Illinois State Rep. Anne Stava  
news release, 08/22/2025*

## **Most Drug Manufacturing Plants Are in Disaster Areas**

A Harvard Medical School study found that among nearly 11,000 active U.S. drug manufacturing plants between 2019 to 2024, 62.8% were located in counties where at least one climate-related disaster was declared.

On average, 33.8% of the facilities were in the path of a climate-related disaster each year, reaching a high of 43.9% in 2020.

It's not just a hypothetical threat either, the researchers noted, as Hurricane Helene last September damaged a Baxter manufacturing facility in North Carolina, contributing to a nationwide intravenous fluid shortage.

*MedPage Today, 08/20/2025*

## **N.C. Facilities Facing A Budget Whack**

Skilled nursing providers in North Carolina are facing a 10% decline in state reimbursement as state leaders grapple with a \$319 million Medicaid shortfall and federal cuts ahead.

State Health and Human Services Secretary Devdutta Sangvai, MD, notified legislative leaders of the impending state-level cuts in a letter last week.

The news came days after lawmakers passed a "mini" budget that cuts Medicaid spending by hundreds of millions of dollars and fails to fully fund a planned rebase related to Medicaid expansion in the state.

Sangvai noted decreases of at least 3% would hit N.C. providers effective Oct. 1.

*McKnight's, 08/18/2025*

## **Anonymous Staff Safety Surveys in Florida's Future**

Florida state regulators have begun the process of writing new regulations for administering anonymous staff safety surveys in long-term care facilities at least once every two years.

The proposed regulation is receiving cautious support from industry groups.

The state Agency for Health Care Administration is in the process of drafting the new rules that came out of a law included in recent budget negotiations, but details are not yet available other than requiring biennial safety surveys.

The surveys are to be administered to all staff members anonymously.

The Florida Health Care Association supported the legislation.

*McKnight's, 08/06/2025*

## **Briefly in the News**

New studies constantly report similar findings – nursing and long-term care homes, especially in rural areas, are closing at an alarming rate. A recent study found South Dakota loses a nursing facility once every seven or eight months, part of a larger trend since 2015 across the nation (South Dakota Public Broadcasting).

Hepatitis B transmission in a skilled nursing facility appeared linked to a shared glucometer. "Sharing blood glucose monitors presents a risk for HBV transmission in nursing homes that can be reduced by nursing homes dedicating glucometers to a single resident, and offering HBV vaccination to adults 60 and older," said Joshua Moore, MPH of the North Carolina Department of Health (*Healio*).

Older adults at highest genetic risk for Alzheimer's disease may benefit the most from following a Mediterranean-style diet, according to new research that tracked thousands of participants for more than three decades. The Mediterranean diet emphasizes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, fish and healthy fats like olive oil, while limiting red meat and processed foods. The [study](#), followed 4,215 women from the Nurses' Health Study for up to 34 years (*Nature Medicine*).

A study analyzed 2,188 stroke survivors and found that about 68% to 69% showed signs of frailty, compared with earlier estimates of around 40% to 45%. The study reported that poor sleep quality was linked to about a threefold higher risk of frailty, while living alone raised risk by 56%. Researchers developed a prediction model identifying five risk factors that can be assessed without specialized medical equipment: older age, poor sleep quality, trouble with balance, frequent nervousness or anxiety and living alone (*BMC Public Health*).

*Be patient with  
patients who are  
not patient*