

IN THE NEWS

News for LTC Professionals
in 100 Words-or-Less

Edited by Drew Vogel

drewvogel5255@msn.com

Vol 9

12/14/2025

They said it

"Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has turned his back on science, on public health, and on the American people - spreading conspiracies and lies, driving up costs, and putting lives at risk" U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens in announcing she has filed articles of impeachment against HHS Sec. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

"This legislation gives states the support they need in order to give seniors the support they deserve" U.S. Senator Andy Kim co-sponsor of the Strategic Plan for Aging Act that would provide grants to states to set up plans for aging

"The fact that we have a [creditors] committee with 11 members [that] is very much opposed to the proposed sale, is very concerned about the auction process and has asserted irregularities, in many cases, I would say this is a non-starter" Bankruptcy Judge Stacey Jernigan in postponing the hearing of the Genesis Healthcare sale

Genesis Sale? Yogi Would Say 'Ain't Over 'Til It's Over'

A federal judge has delayed approval of Genesis HealthCare's proposed sale to an inside buyer by at least a week, saying she wants to take multiple days of testimony and consider arguments against the former nursing home's right to dictate its future.

The judge opened a hearing on the post-auction sale to CPE, an affiliate of Genesis private equity investor Pinta Capital.

She also may review a proposal from creditors, to whom Genesis owes money, to consider a deal with an alternate bidder.

Genesis hand-selected CPE as its "stalking horse" buyer following a late November auction.

McKnight's, 12/10/2025

CMS to Suspend Medicare Revalidation Indefinitely

CMS is again postponing skilled nursing facilities' mandatory off-cycle revalidation deadline — this time indefinitely.

This is the fourth postponement of a deadline for nursing home owners to provide newly expanded, complicated ownership and business relationship information.

Unlike the federal nursing home staffing mandate that was repealed last week, however, sources emphasized that the ownership transparency demands remain official policy.

CMS said software and "logistical" concerns forced the delay.

The Biden-era demands require every nursing facility to name any person or entity that could have a controlling interest in a nursing home's operations — down to the vendor and volunteer levels.

McKnight's, 12/09/2025

Medicaid Underpayments Slam For-Profit Facilities

The authors of a 2024 national report that found Medicaid covers an average of 82 cents on the dollar for nursing home services, published a new paper this week that uses similar data to better evaluate cost pressures.

The researchers from several universities found that 18% of for-profit nursing homes served a patient mix that was 80% to 100% Medicaid, versus just 8% of nonprofits.

That means those for-profits were more likely to derive most of their revenues from Medicaid and were more financially challenged in low-rate states, affecting spending on wages and operations.

Medical Care, 12/11/2025

Providers Tell HHS to Pull Proposed HIPAA Redo

More than 100 health systems and other provider organizations "have united to oppose" cybersecurity and privacy regulations proposed back in January.

The groups, corralled by the College of Healthcare Information Management

Executives, wrote to HHS this week, warning that the financial burdens and "unreasonable implementation timelines" outlined by the prior administration run counter to President Trump's deregulatory agenda.

Major organizations such as the AMA, the Federation of Hospitals and AHCA/NCAL said they share the importance of HIPAA, but argued it must be flexible enough to accommodate the wide range of organizations.

Fierce Healthcare, 12/09/2025

House Democrat Seeks Impeachment of RFK Jr.

Michigan Congresswoman Haley Stevens has filed articles of impeachment against HHS Sec. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. contending he "has imperiled the health and safety of the American people, eroded public confidence in the nation's public health institutions, and stalled decades of scientific and medical progress."

Stevens pointed to actions taken by Kennedy, including cutting research funding restricting access to COVID vaccines for pregnant women and healthy children; and firing all 17 previous members of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

The House minority (Democrat) leadership has not yet signaled support for the impeachment effort.

MedPage Today, 12/10/2025

Kennedy Said He Won't Pull Vaccines, But

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. may have said he won't take vaccines away from anyone, but that's exactly what Children's Health Defense, the anti-vaccine organization he founded, asked the Food and Drug Administration to do in a petition this week.

The formal document — which the agency is required to respond to — is part of a growing call to pull the shots from the market.

And it comes during a week when the agency said it's expanding an investigation of deaths potentially related to the shots, this time in adults.

Axios, 12/11/2025

IN THE TRENCHES

COVID-19 & Other Outbreaks in the U.S. and the World

WASHINGTON, D.C: Weeks after a senior agency official claimed — without offering evidence — that Covid-19 vaccinations resulted in the deaths of 10 children, a spokesman for the FDA said it is also looking at other age groups. However, Andrew Nixon declined to offer details on what data sources are being used and what potential changes, if any, are being considered to Covid vaccine approval or marketing (*CNN Health*).

AMERICA: In a study of over 288,111 veterans the effectiveness of a single respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine dose declined dramatically over 18 months. Authors note that the RSV vaccine is still effective, but older and immunocompromised individuals may require additional booster shots for the vaccine to maintain its effectiveness (*JAMA Internal Medicine*).

WASHINGTON, D.C: Children's National Hospital reports there is a quick way to tell where you have COVID or influenza. While COVID symptoms tend to start gradually then escalate rapidly, the flu hits hard and fast from the get-go. Incubation periods are different also — 1-to-4 days for the flu and 2-to-14 days for COVID (*The Hill*).

THE WORLD: The State Department issued a terse statement last week saying, "an awareness day is not a strategy." The result is that on December 1, the U.S. did not commemorate World AIDS Day. It's the first time the U.S. has not participated since the WHO created this day in 1988 to remember the millions of people who have died of AIDS-related illnesses and recommit to fighting the epidemic that still claims the lives of more than half a million people each year (*NPR*).

SAN FRANCISCO: Seven people with HIV were able to control the virus without medication for several months — and in one case for more than a year — after undergoing complex immune therapy at UCSF, results that scientists say could be a critical step in eradicating an infection that's killed tens of millions globally. The aggressive treatment protocol included a

vaccine, antibodies and other immune-boosting therapies over a period of months before taking people off daily antiretroviral medication (*Nature*).

NEW YORK: Women younger than 50 accounted for about a quarter of all breast cancers diagnosed at a large community imaging practice in New York, with a substantial number in women under age 40, a retrospective review found. Of the nearly 1,800 breast cancers diagnosed from 2014 to 2024 among women ages 18 to 49 years, 23% occurred in women under 40 years of age, a group currently not recommended for routine screening (*MedPage Today*).

OREGON: The state has seen a record-high number of cases of whooping cough, also known as pertussis, this year, prompting concern about the risks posed to vulnerable populations. On December 10, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recorded 1,475 reported annual cases of whooping cough, breaking the state's record of 1,420 that was set in 1950 (*Newsweek*).

CALIFORNIA: Officials are warning foragers after an outbreak of poisoning linked to wild mushrooms that has killed one adult and caused severe liver damage in several patients, including children. The state poison control system has identified 21 cases of amatoxin poisoning, likely caused by death cap mushrooms. The toxic wild mushrooms are often mistaken for edible ones because of their appearance and taste (*AP*).

IDAHO: A man died of rabies after getting a kidney transplant from another man who died of the virus, only the fourth instance in nearly 50 years in which an organ donor passed the virus to a recipient. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported on that an Idaho man was on his rural property in October 2024 when a skunk approached him and scratched him on the shin (*The New York Times*).

FLORIDA: Keith Myers, CEO of MorseLife Health Systems, has agreed to pay \$250,000. Myers directed MorseLife employees to arrange for individuals who were neither residents nor staff of MorseLife to obtain COVID-19

vaccinations at MorseLife vaccine clinics funded by the LTC PPP. The LTC PPP funded COVID-19 vaccines for residents and staff of long-term care facilities (*HHS-OIG*).

THE WORLD: While extensive studies have found COVID-19 vaccines to be safe, effective, and to have saved millions of lives during the pandemic, these shots come with a rare but real risk of inflamed heart muscle, or myocarditis. Data from multiple countries and the U.S. allowed researchers to spot cases of chest pain, shortness of breath, and palpitations in some recently vaccinated people. These symptoms, which were mostly mild, appear after about 7 out of every million first vaccine doses (*Stat*).

FRANCE: A large national study from France didn't observe any increase in all-cause mortality in adults up to four years after receipt of a COVID mRNA vaccine. Actually, vaccination was linked to a 74% lower risk of death from severe COVID-19 and a 25% lower risk of death from any cause (*CIDRAP*).

SOUTH CAROLINA: Health officials in South Carolina reported eight new measles cases and exposures at four new schools. In a December 5 update, the Department of Public Health said seven of the new cases are household members of known measles cases. DPH notified potentially exposed students, faculty, and staff at the four schools on December 1. There are currently 281 individuals in quarantine and two in isolation (*CIDRAP*).

UNITED KINGDOM: The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has identified a new mpox strain in England in an individual who had recently travelled to Asia. Genomic sequencing revealed that the new virus strain had elements of clade 1b and 11b mpox, which are both currently circulating (*CIDRAP*).

COVID-19, 12/03/2025

World Total Cases
778,956,825

World Total Deaths
7,103,462

U.S. Total Deaths
1.2+ Million

World Health Organization

Black Box Warnings On COVID-19 Vaccines

The FDA intends to put a “black box” warning on Covid-19 vaccines, according to two people familiar with the agency’s plans.

It’s the latest move by President Donald Trump’s health officials to undermine a vaccine that was estimated to have saved nearly 20 million lives worldwide.

The plan shocked outside experts, who said there was no basis for the warning.

A boxed warning, which appears at the top of prescribing information for medicines, is the agency’s most serious, designed to warn about risks such as death or life-threatening or disabling reactions that should be weighed against the intervention’s benefits.

CNN, 12/12/2025

We Trust AMA Over CDC When It Comes to Vaccines

Americans are more likely to accept guidance on vaccines from the American Medical Association than from the CDC, although trust isn’t particular high for either organization

Forty-three percent of self-identified Democrats said they would accept the AMA’s recommendation regarding the safety of a vaccine, and 18% would accept the CDC’s. Three in 10 (31%) self-identified Republicans said they are more likely to accept the AMA’s recommendation over the CDC’s (13%).

Overall, by a two-to-one margin, those polled said they would accept AMA’s recommendations (35%) over the CDC’s (16%) if the two bodies issued conflicting statements on vaccine safety.

Annenberg Public Policy Center, 12/04/2025

AI Knowledge Gap Among Healthcare Professionals

In a nationwide survey, nearly half (44%) of healthcare professionals believe artificial intelligence (AI) could significantly ease their staffing crisis through operational efficiencies, yet 53% admit they have no idea how to use AI.

The Relias 2025 Technology in Healthcare Report surveyed over 2,000

healthcare professionals across acute, post-acute, behavioral health, payer and other care settings.

It underscores a critical disconnect for providers: While 66% of survey respondents identify workforce shortages as their top challenge, tools that could help, such as AI for scheduling optimization, predictive analytics for retention, and automated documentation, remain foreign concepts to most frontline managers.

McKnight’s Home Care, 11/26/2025

Medline IPO May Raise Over \$5 Billion

Medical supplies giant Medline said it was targeting an up to \$55.3 billion valuation in its hotly anticipated U.S. initial public offering that is expected to be 2025’s biggest IPO.

Medline, one of the largest manufacturers and distributors of medical supplies used by nursing homes and hospitals worldwide, is seeking to raise up to \$5.37 billion by offering 179 million shares priced between \$26 and \$30 apiece.

Medline went public in 1972, before being taken private again by the founders in 1977. Blackstone Carlyle and Hellman & Friedman together acquired the company in a \$34 billion deal in 2021.

Reuters, 12/08/2025

Bill Would Help States With Aging Plans

Legislation has been reintroduced in the U.S. Senate to create a nationwide grant program to support states’ efforts to create their own Master Plans for Aging.

At least 38 states are currently implementing, developing, or initiating a comprehensive plans to address the needs of older adults.

Awardees will finalize and begin the implementation of their plan no later than 2 years after receiving the grant. The plan should cover a 10-year period.

Up to 65 grants of \$500,000 or less can be implemented over a 5-year period.

*U.S. Senator Kristen Gillibrand,
news release, 12/04/2025*

ONE COLUMN

“Sittin’ on a Gold Mine” With Nursing Homes’ Gold

While nursing home penalties have increased markedly in recent years, providers have said CMP projects have not been correspondingly boosted despite higher collections.

States held more than \$485 million in penalties collected from nursing homes at the start of 2025, according to updated federal data that appears to support nursing homes’ contention that reinvestment funds are held out of their reach.

In fact, several states didn’t fund a single new project in 2024.

CMS collects fines from non-compliant nursing homes and then returns a portion to states, which can then allot those funds to applicants pursuing a variety of improvement initiatives.

But skilled nursing providers have long complained that states are reluctant to spend down their reinvestment accounts.

A new ledger published Dec. 1 shows 30 states had civil money penalty fund balances of at least \$10 million each on Jan. 1, 2025, with eight of those holding assets of at least \$20 million.

The five states with the largest CMP nest eggs are:

- Florida \$41 million
- North Carolina \$38.6 million
- Kentucky \$38.5 million
- Texas \$34.3 million
- Michigan \$32 million

The data underscores how vastly states are underspending cash earmarked for projects that should improve quality of care, resident quality of life, resident or family councils, and consumer information.

However, Jodi Eyigor of LeadingAge said CMS had recently taken “significant steps” toward transparency along with new rules that allow spending on health IT behavioral health and workforce development projects — could influence spending in the future.

McKnight’s, 12/09/2025

States Initiate Efforts to Protect Seniors From Fraud

Florida has introduced Operation Senior Shield, a statewide initiative designed to ensure older adults, caregivers and providers have timely and practical information to stay one step ahead of emerging scams.

The program provides older adults, caregivers, and families with free scam alerts, enhanced statewide coordination with law enforcement, and tools to stay informed and secure.

Pennsylvania, has launched an expansion of protections and services for older adults, with a focus on deterring financial theft and holding offenders criminally responsible.

Pennsylvania will focus on cases typically perpetrated by relatives, caregivers or appointed conservators and powers of attorney.

Senior Living, 11/26/2025

National VOA OK, State Affiliate To Stand Trial

The national Volunteers of America does not have to face trial in a federal False Claims lawsuit after convincing a judge the national organization can't be dragged into a case based on allegations against its Louisiana affiliate.

A former employee of the Louisiana VOA sued last year claiming she'd been pressured to deem residents eligible for Medicaid.

Former support coordinator Natasha Dixon sued VOA and Volunteers of America South Central Louisiana early last year, claiming she'd been pressured to deem nursing home residents eligible for Medicaid enrollment.

She was fired for what she termed "retaliation."

McKnight's, 11/30/2025

SAFE SNFs Through Daily Reporting

One of the nation's largest skilled nursing chains has launched routine facility-level safety meetings designed to address patient care, concerns about daily processes and policy needs.

Good Samaritan Society's daily SAFE meetings include an administrator or nurse leader from every nursing home and are an outgrowth of SAFE, the Sanford Accountability For Excellence program.

Observers said it may be one of the most comprehensive approaches to elevating patient safety in the nursing home sector, which has historically lagged behind acute care in developing systems to report and examine patient safety challenges with the aim of improvement.

McKnight's, 11/30/2025

Buys About 5,000 Beds for Over Half-Billion Bucks

A skilled nursing portfolio comprising 5,000 licensed beds across seven Midwestern and Southeastern states has been sold for about \$545 million

The involved parties were not identified, but sources said the facilities were previously associated with Tara Cares and were acquired by Cascade Capital Group.

Legacy Healthcare is the operating partner of Cascade.

The portfolio spans Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

Skilled Nursing News, 12/02/2025

On Avg. LTC Insurance Covers Less Than 3 Years

In a report from America's Health Insurance Plans, long-term care insurance policies are being used to cover an average of 2.6 years in assisted living, where the average annual cost to live is \$70,800,

By comparison, in nursing homes, long-term care insurance policies cover an average of 1.5 years. There, private rooms cost \$127,750 and semi-private rooms cost \$111,325 annually, on average.

More than 6.9 million people nationwide were covered by long-term care insurance in 2024.

Last year, LTC policies paid out almost \$16.9 billion in claims – the average claim was \$185,572.

Senior Living, 12/02/2025

Briefly in the News

Republicans remain divided over how to address the impending expiration of more generous Affordable Care Act plan tax credits which, if no further action is taken, will send premiums spiraling for millions of Americans starting in January. The Trump administration has floated a proposal that included a two-year extension of the credits as well as some restrictions pushed by Republicans, but the plan was met with strong pushback on Capitol Hill and its unveiling was delayed (*KFF Health News*).

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has been awarded \$20 million from a foundation started by Facebook cofounder Eduardo Saverin and his wife, Elaine. The funding will be used to advance metastatic breast cancer research and care, according to an announcement posted on Dana-Farber's website (*The Boston Globe*).

Federal regulators are proposing paring back the Medicare Advantage Star Ratings program. The draft regulation issued by CMS also invites public input on how the administration should overhaul its Advantage-related policies. It additionally includes tweaks to the Medicare Part D prescription drug program. The proposed rule could offer insurers a bit of breathing room amid increasing pressure on prior authorization, marketing and audits. (*Modern Healthcare*).

The Department of Veterans Affairs has completely eliminated the backlog of CHAMPVA applications, ending years of delays that left thousands of Veteran spouses, dependents, survivors, and caregivers waiting for health care coverage, and ushering in what VA leaders say is a new era of faster, more efficient access for Veteran families (*Military.com*).

Although SNAP benefits returned for millions of Americans after the federal government shutdown ended last month, food banks and pantries across the U.S. are still seeing droves of people showing up to receive aid. Despite many states saying that benefits would be available immediately following the disruption, workers at food distribution sites are seeing a surge of people -- a trend they say is likely to continue into the holidays (*ABC News*).