



Medicaid HCBS and PACE Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

March 24, 2023

Upcoming LeadingAge Policy Update Call on Monday, March 27, at 3:30pm ET. On the Monday, March 27, Policy Update Call we will have **Dr. Alice Bonner from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) to talk about Age-Friendly Health Systems**, which are health systems that reliably provide a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the “4Ms,” to all older adults in its system: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility. Dr. Bonner will be joined by **Kim Church, National Lead for Age-Friendly Health Systems, Veterans Health Administration’s Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**, to talk about the VA’s experience adopting Age-Friendly Health Systems. You can also find previous call recordings of every 3:30 LeadingAge call [here](#). Note that to access recordings of the calls you need a LeadingAge password. Any staff member of any LeadingAge member organization can set up a password to access previous calls and other “members only” content.

HCBS Settings Rule Compliance Date was Friday, March 17! The Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS) Final Rule was initially proposed in 2014. The implementation timeframes and compliance deadline has been extended multiple times, resulting in March 17, 2023 as the date the rule takes full effect. Some states have submitted corrective action plans (CAP) to delay implementation and compliance with some components. CMS has CAPs posted on their [website](#). As the rule takes effect, providers and states will grapple with monitoring and maintenance of compliance. If you have challenges as this unfolds, please contact Georgia (ggoodman@leadingage.org).

State Waiver Flexibility for Medicaid Eligibility Unwinding As states work through their Medicaid unwinding efforts, some states have submitted waiver requests to CMS to enable different flexibilities. Options for states were initially outlined in March of 2022 in the [State Health Official \(SHO\) letter #22-001](#). Under Section 1902(e)(14)(A), states can extend timeframes, involve additional organizations and their data, and use other social service program renewals to determine Medicaid eligibility for a limited period of time. To undertake any of these flexibilities, states must discuss their desire to implement one or more of these flexibilities. CMS has approved 163 waivers in 43 states and posted a table of approved waivers [here](#). LeadingAge is maintaining a one-stop-shop of Medicaid Unwinding resources [here](#).

Support for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. LeadingAge recently joined with nearly 225 other national organizations on a Statement of Support for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps). At its March 16 USDA oversight hearing, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) entered the statement into the hearing record. Clients, residents, and some staff of LeadingAge provider members rely on the SNAP program. “With an end to SNAP Emergency Allotments, SNAP food benefits have decreased to an average of only about \$6 a person a day. Moreover, SNAP benefits are not available to all people with low-incomes who

need them. Going forward it is vital to protect and further strengthen SNAP benefit adequacy and equitable access,” the statement says. Read the full statement [here](#).

Eliminating Barriers to Interstate Compacts. On March 20, 11 members of the House of Representatives, led by Representatives Tracey Mann (R-KS) and Joe Neguse (D-CO), reintroduced the [State Handling Access to Reciprocity for Employment \(SHARE\) Act](#). The measure, first introduced in the 117th Congress, would make it easier for health care providers to practice more quickly when they move across state lines by allowing the FBI to share background checks across states. The bill was quickly endorsed by a number of health care related organizations including the National Rural Health Association, occupational and physical therapy organizations, and the American Speech Language Hearing Association. If enacted, the bill would reduce the amount of time consumed by new, additional background checks on staff, including long-term care providers and administrators. In the spirit of the workforce crisis requiring 100 different solutions, this would be one more tool in the toolbox.

LeadingAge: Solutions for Aging Services Workforce Shortage. On March 20, LeadingAge responded to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee’s request for information related to the health care workforce with a sweeping review of the causes and potential solutions to the severe aging services workforce shortage. LeadingAge’s comments included data, member testimonials, and powerful policy solutions. “The future health, well-being, and lives of older Americans are in your hands. These problems are resolvable with the right set of policy actions,” the comments say. Read LeadingAge’s comments [here](#).

Federal Bill Would Expand Medicare, Medicaid Coverage for Dental, Vision, Hearing. A new piece of legislation ([the Medicare and Medicaid Dental, Vision, and Hearing Benefit Act](#)) introduced by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) would help Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries access comprehensive dental, vision and hearing care under federal and state insurance programs. Some older adults can access these health services through Medicare Advantage plans or short-term individual plans, but often they come with high out-of-pocket costs. Dental, vision and hearing issues affect older adults in many ways such as development of cardiovascular disease, exacerbating fall risks, and increasing social isolation.

ACL Proposes to Expand their Direct Care Workforce Priorities. In September 2022, HHS’ Administration for Community Living (ACL) established a national technical assistance center to help strengthen the direct care workforce. With FY 2023 funding, ACL is beginning to build a hub through which state, private, and federal entities involved in the recruitment, training and retention of direct care workers can access model policies, best practices, training materials, technical assistance, and learning collaboratives. In FY 2024, ACL requests \$11.5 million to fully fund operation of the resource hub and to support development of new approaches, as follows:

- [Aging Network Support Activities – Direct Care Workforce \(+\\$8 million\)](#) to fully fund hub operations and establish demonstration grants to test recruiting, retention, and training approaches that can be replicated and scaled across states.
- [Developmental Disabilities Projects of National Significance \(+\\$3 million\)/Independent Living Projects of National Significance \(+\\$500,000\)](#) to extend the scope of the above-described initiatives to the direct care workforce that supports people with disabilities who are not covered by the statutory authority of Older Americans Act.

The Direct Care Workforce information can be found on page 12 of the *FY’24 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees* (found [here](#) on the ACL website). An article with additional details is available [here](#).

HHS Reports Record Enrollment on ACA’s 13th Anniversary. On March 23, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [released a report](#) from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) showing more than 40 million people are currently enrolled in Marketplace or Medicaid expansion coverage related to provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the highest total on record. The report, which was released as the Administration celebrates the 13th anniversary of the ACA, noted that the record enrollment levels are due in part to enhanced subsidies for Marketplace coverage included in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and later extended by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. The [Medicaid and CHIP continuous enrollment provision](#) for the COVID-19 public health emergency will come to an end on March 31, 2023, following the enactment of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (LeadingAge resources on the unwinding of Medicaid Continuous Coverage are [here](#)). The [White House also released state-by-state fact sheets](#) on the potential impacts that proposed policy changes, such as repealing the ACA and cutting Medicaid, could have on Americans.

Medicaid HCBS and PACE Weekly Update for the week of March 13, 2023. Here is your weekly [HCBS and PACE Weekly Update](#).

Join the PACE or Adult Day Network! If you’re a member of LeadingAge and interested in joining our [networks](#) for either Adult Day or PACE providers, please email Georgia – ggoodman@leadingage.org.