

Member Call Summary

June 27, 2025

Summer Series: Anna Heller from Sunrise

Reconciliation Update

Early on June 26, Senate Budget Ranking Member Jeff Merkley (D-OR) released the [latest provisions of the budget reconciliation bill that had been ruled noncompliant with budget reconciliation rules \(the Byrd Rule\)](#) — including those in the Senate Finance Committee's health text. A number of provisions — including but not limited to the Senate's provider tax framework, the reduction in federal match for states that choose to cover immigrants without status with state funds, the prohibition of federal matching funds for individuals without verified citizenship, nationality or satisfactory immigration status, and the narrowing of legal immigrants eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, were found to be noncompliant with the Byrd Rule. The Parliamentarian has yet to rule on the permanent rollback of the Eligibility and Enrollment Rules and the Nursing Home Staffing Standard.

Senate Republicans are working to try to "cure" these provisions, which means make them eligible under reconciliation to be included. It is possible some of these provisions may end up being dropped from the legislation. We anticipate that the Senate Republicans will find a way to move forward with a change to provider taxes, but we do not know what that will look like. For the coverage provisions related to immigration, Senate Republicans think they have solved this issue related to the Supplementation Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) so will likely apply the same changes to Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act marketplaces. With regards to the immigrant provisions related to FMAP, we do not yet know how changes will be approached.

For the rules, we await the Parliamentarian's ruling — and think that potentially a reversion to the House version would cure the issues but are monitoring closely. The fixes to the text do not have to be completed to start the process of passing the bill. Senate Majority Leader Thune is still hoping to hold the vote over the weekend — starting even as early as June 27. He can start the process with a partial bill and offer an amendment later on in the weekend that includes final changes. House Speaker Johnson has asked House members to be available to vote as early as Monday at 6:30pm, but the timeline in both chambers is still very much in flux.

Bring Advocacy Home: Host Your Legislator Toolkit Makes Legislative Visits Easy and Impactful

At LeadingAge Iowa, we know that the most powerful advocacy doesn't just happen under the golden dome of the Iowa Capitol; it happens every day in the communities where older adults live and receive care. That's why we're excited to introduce our **"Host Your Legislator" Toolkit**, designed to make it as easy as possible for members to invite state lawmakers into your organizations and show them firsthand what high-quality aging services look like.

There's no substitute for face-to-face interaction. When legislators walk your halls, meet your staff, and hear directly from residents and families, they carry those experiences with them into every policy conversation. These visits help them understand what it takes to provide compassionate, person-centered care, and how state decisions around workforce, funding, and regulation directly affect your ability to do so.

The good news? You don't need to be a political expert to host a meaningful visit. Our toolkit includes everything you need:

- **Invitation Letter** – to help you make the ask with confidence
- **Fact Sheet** – a customizable handout with key information about your organization
- **Legislative One-Pager** – focused talking points on the most pressing advocacy issues
- **Media Advisory & Press Release Templates** – to help you share the visit with your local community

Whether you're new to advocacy or a seasoned pro, this toolkit will save you time and give you confidence to open your doors and share your story. As the state continues to debate how best to support older Iowans, your voice and visibility matter more than ever. Hosting your legislator is one of the simplest and most effective ways to strengthen relationships and influence decisions that impact your organization, staff, and the people you serve.

Ready to get started? Access the toolkit now at [insert link] or contact LeadingAge Iowa staff for personalized support.

Together, let's make sure every Iowa lawmaker sees what quality aging services really look like, and why they're worth investing in. For any questions, email sheibel@leadinageiowa.org.

Make Change on Federal Policy with LeadingAge Advocacy Resources

- **Action Alert: Urge Senate to Oppose Reconciliation Bill:** The Senate's version of H.R. 1, passed in the House May 22, is now under consideration. Provisions in

this legislation would deeply harm older adults and the mission-driven, nonprofit providers who serve them in various ways, including cutting at least \$800 billion in federal funding from the Medicaid program—the largest reductions, ever, to date—and removing up to 16 million people from insurance coverage. Though the bill has a few redeeming qualities, it must be opposed on the Senate floor. Read more, then contact your Senators using this [Action Alert](#).

- Immigration Policy Toolkit Helps Raise Voices to Protect Foreign-Born Staff: Seeking to help residents fulfill their desire to advocate on behalf of their communities' dedicated foreign-born staff, who as legal employees provide caregiving, hospitality, and other services but are now under threat due to current White House policies that limit temporary protections, members nationwide asked LeadingAge for an advocacy resource. Help residents tell Congress to protect these essential workers with LeadingAge's new [Immigration Advocacy Toolkit for Residents](#).

Congratulations to Sunrise Retirement Community!

We're proud to recognize **Sunrise Retirement Community** for their outstanding contribution to the *Iowa Healthcare Workforce Strategies: a Webinar Series*. In the second video of the series, Mindee Knudson, Director of Nursing, and Courtney Hudelson, Director of HR, share how Sunrise successfully partnered with a university to create accessible, career-aligned learning pathways for frontline workers, nurses, and support staff.

This innovative approach is a powerful example of how LeadingAge Iowa members are investing in their workforce and shaping the future of aging services. Congratulations to the entire Sunrise team for leading the way and inspiring others with your commitment to education and employee growth!

Watch their story and others in the series here: [Iowa Healthcare Workforce Strategies: a Webinar Series](#).

Celebrating 75 Years of Excellence: Congratulations to Friendship Haven!

LeadingAge Iowa proudly congratulates **Friendship Haven** in Fort Dodge on an extraordinary milestone- **75 years of serving older adults with compassion, innovation, and excellence**. Since opening its doors in 1950, Friendship Haven has remained a trusted and forward-thinking leader in aging services, dedicated to enhancing the lives of those they serve through high-quality care and a commitment to community.

This anniversary marks more than just the passage of time; it reflects decades of heartfelt service, dedicated staff, and a mission-driven approach that continues to inspire. We commend the entire Friendship Haven team for their unwavering dedication to older adults and their families.

New Member Resource Available

This [Nurse Delegation Resource](#) provides an overview of nurse delegation to assist licensed nurses with the responsibilities of appropriate nurse delegation.

Fraudulent Fax Alert Issued by CMS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a [fraudulent fax phishing alert](#). The alert details a scheme targeting Medicare providers where scammers impersonate CMS and send phishing fax requests. The phishing fax requests medical records and other documentation indicating the targeted provider is being audited. CMS reminds providers that they do not initiate audits by requesting medical records via fax. If you are targeted by suspicious activity, including this kind of phish, providers should work with their [review contractor](#) to understand if a request is verifiable.

Medicare Advantage Prior Authorization Changes on the Horizon

On June 23, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and a group of health insurers – including United Healthcare, Aetna, Humana, and a group of Blue Cross & Blue Shield plans announced they would be streamlining, simplifying, and reducing prior authorizations within Medicare Advantage (MA) plans and other insurance products. However, what sounds like MA plans finally taking responsibility for the flawed, burden-some system of prior authorizations, in many cases, is just the plans saying they will comply with regulatory requirements that were finalized in recent years and that take effect in 2026 and 2027.

The MA plans have committed to standardize electronic prior authorizations; reduce the number of prior authorizations required and respond in real-time to prior authorization requests (when all needed clinical documentation is included). It remains to be seen how the implementation of these changes will impact the burden on post-acute care providers. On a positive note, the HHS and CMS actions would suggest they intend to see the previously finalized rules governing these prior authorization changes implemented and enforced. LeadingAge, along with the Post Acute Care Coalition Partners, will be meeting with CMS on July 9 to discuss prior authorization practices, ideas for further improvements, and these latest developments.

OIG Adds Evaluation of Medical Directors' Engagement to Work Plan

In an updated work plan released June 16, the Health & Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced that it will be evaluating the engagement of medical directors in nursing homes. "Monitoring Nursing Homes' Engagement of Medical Directors" will examine the following:

- The extent to which medical directors performed required duties in nursing homes.
- The extent to which payroll-based journal (PBJ) data on medical director hours are accurate and useful for oversight.
- Opportunities to improve oversight and transparency of nursing homes' engagement and funding of medical directors.

This news comes at a time when medical directors are coming under higher scrutiny during the survey process as well. The report is expected to be issued in Fiscal Year 2026. You can see all active items on the OIG work plan [here](#).

Reminder: June 30, 2025 – [Applications to Iowa Medicaid for NFIF](#) funding due.

Upcoming Events

Leveraging Rehab Outcomes for Managed Care: Section GG Isn't Enough Webinar (virtual)

July 10, 2025 from 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Learn how supplementing Section GG with physical performance metrics like Gait Speed and the 6-Minute Walk Test can improve outcome tracking, guide discharge planning, and predict rehospitalization risk through powerful data aggregation strategies.

CAA Virtual Program (virtual)

July 17, 2025 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

LeadingAge Iowa, in partnership with LeadingAge Oregon, is offering a virtual workshop designed for the entire interdisciplinary team to strengthen care planning skills. This program provides a comprehensive review of all 20 Care Area Assessments (CAAs), equipping both new and experienced nursing home staff with best practices for developing and enhancing resident care plans.

Illinois Annual Conference

July 21 – 23, 2025 Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Hotel

[2025 Annual Conference](#)