



Missouri Health Care Association

# Weekly Update

December 22, 2023

During this holiday season, we want to take time to thank each of you again for how you have persevered and risen to the enormous challenges set before you each and every day. We know how tough things continue to be for each and every one of you. There is never an easy day in your working lives and yet still, you show up and deliver quality care and attention to our most vulnerable residents. We are proud to represent you and appreciate all your hard work and dedication.

Please pay special attention to the Reimbursement Update below as we have some good news to report to close out the year.

As a reminder, the MHCA Office will be closed on Monday, December 25, 2023 in observance of the Christmas holiday.

We wish you many blessings and much happiness this holiday season!

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## Reimbursement Update

### **UPDATE: CMS APPROVES FY24 \$10 PPD and VBP Incentive Increases**

We have great news to report! MO HealthNet (MHD) notified us a short time ago that they just received approval from CMS of the State Plan Amendment (SPA) for the \$10 PPD rate increase and the \$.87 increase to the VBP incentive effective July 1, 2023. The state is working to get its emergency regulation filed and will begin going through its internal processes in order to timely institute the increases.

Please note, it typically takes the state between 4-6 weeks to process the increase once CMS approves. Once the emergency regulation takes effect, which is approximately 10 days after it is filed, the state can begin working on rate letters and other processing. We anticipate facilities will receive their rate letters and begin being paid their new rate around the first half of February.

The state will first work to implement the new rate. Once facilities begin receiving their new rate, then the state will begin to work on the retro payment back to July 1, 2023. We anticipate facilities will see the retro payment within 2 – 4 weeks after it begins being paid the new rate. Please note, and as further explained below, the state will utilize the retro payment for the 7/1/23 \$10 PPD and VBP increase to offset any recoupments necessary as a result of decreases to rates for the semi-annual CMI/VBP

adjustments on 1/1/23, 7/1/23 and 1/1/24.

We have cleared the biggest hurdle of this process now that CMS has finally approved the plan amendment. The state has assured us they will get the rate processed as quickly as possible. We will keep you updated when we learn anything new regarding timing; however, do not expect to learn anything new until after the first of the year.

### **Update January 1, 2023 and July 1, 2023 CMI/VBP Rate Adjustment Retro Pay/Recoupments**

We have additional good news to report. The state decided to move forward and issue the 7/1/23 retro payments to the facilities whose rates increased due to CMI/VBP adjustments on both 1/1/23 and 7/1/23. The state realized facilities could use the additional funding due to them. Facilities who are due a retro payment for the 7/1/23 CMI/VBP rate adjustment based on the above description, will receive the retro payment with today's (12/22/23) Medicaid payment.

However, please note, if your facility's rate increased 7/1/23 but decreased on 1/1/23 – you will not receive a retro payment because the state will use the 7/1/23 rate increase to offset the 1/1/23 decrease and necessary recoupment. The state will make these recoupments in conjunction with the retro payment of the \$10 PPD and VBP incentive approved by CMS and will utilize the retro payment of the \$10 increase and any increases to their Medicaid rated effective 7/1/23 and 1/1/24 to offset any recoupments necessary.

It is our hope that all the recoupments can be covered through this process; however, if there is a situation where the recoupment is more than the retro payment, we will work with MHD on developing the best plan possible for the facilities that may still be in a recoupment situation. I want to be clear, we don't know if any facilities will be in a situation where further recoupment is necessary, but if they are, MHD has committed to working on a fair recoupment process.

### **Update on Status of January 1, 2024 Rate Letters Based on CMI/VBP Semi-Annual Adjustment**

MHD has changed course on the timing of issuing the January 1, 2024 rate letters for the semi-annual CMI/VBP adjustment. Since CMS surprised them with the SPA approval for the \$10 PPD increase and \$.87 VBP incentive increase prior to the first of the year, MHD will wait to adjust the 1/1/24 rates and send rate letters in conjunction with the \$10 PPD and VBP increase and include the 1/1/24 adjustment as well. This should result in a smoother process for not only the state, but also facilities.

As a result of this decision, you will not receive your 1/1/24 rate letter or payment of the new rate until after the first of the year. Once the 1/1/24 rate letter is released it will be inclusive of the \$10 PPD and VBP increase. As stated above, the state believes it will be able to process the new rate around the first of February. Therefore, any adjustments upward or downward as a result of the 1/1/24 CMI/VBP will be part of the retro mass adjusted payment of the \$10 and increase in VBP incentive payment. Again, we will keep you updated as we learn more.

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**Provider Relief Fund Reporting Period 6 Opens January 1**

The Provider Relief Fund (PRF) Reporting Period 6 (RP6) opens January 1, 2024, and will remain open through March 31, 2024, at 11:50 pm EST.

Providers who received one or more PRF (general or targeted) and/or American Rescue Plan Rural payment(s) exceeding \$10,000 in the aggregate from July 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, must report on their use of funds in RP6. The deadline to use funds from RP6 is December 31, 2023. The [Allowable Expenses webpage](#) provides more information on appropriate uses of the payments.

Additionally, details on reporting requirements are available in the [Post-Payment Notice of Reporting Requirements Notice](#).

**([READ MORE](#))**

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## **Message from AHCA President and CEO Mark Parkinson**

Please click [here](#) to read an important message from AHCA President and CEO Mark Parkinson that summarizes the status of the LTC industry for 2023 and looks ahead to 2024.

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## **CDC Advisory on Low Vaccine Uptake**

The CDC [issued a Health Advisory](#) to health care providers about low vaccination rates against influenza, COVID-19, and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) in all settings and populations. These low vaccination rates, coupled with ongoing increases in respiratory disease, could lead to more severe disease and increased health care capacity strain in the coming weeks. Currently, the highest respiratory disease activity in the United States is occurring across the southern half of the country, with increasing activity in northern states. In the past four weeks, hospitalizations among all age groups increased by [200% for influenza](#), [51% for COVID-19](#), and [60% for RSV](#).

The CDC is asking health care providers to:

**([READ MORE](#))**

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## **Keep Working on Your Quality Award Applications**

Completing a successful Quality Award application takes time to prepare. We encourage you over the next few weeks to keep working on your applications and submit them before the deadline on Thursday, January 25, 2024. If you have not already done so, take advantage of the free resources!

### Bronze Quality Award Workshop

The National Quality Award team is hosting a virtual workshop for members interested in submitting a 2024 Bronze Quality Award on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 1 pm CST. Join hosts Pamela Truscott, Director of Quality Improvement at NCAL, and Tim Case, Administrator of the Quality Award Program, as they guide you through the nuances of the Bronze application process.

Please click [here](#) to register to secure your spot for this FREE event, which is open to everyone interested in elevating their commitment to quality. Whether you've

submitted an intent to apply or not, you can attend the workshop and apply before the deadline on Thursday, January 25.

**[\(READ MORE\)](#)**

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## **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Bed and Service Availability Portal**

The Covid-19 Long-Term Care Bed Availability portal has been replaced with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Bed and Service Availability portal. Long-Term Care Homes (all levels of care) have the option to fill out an electronic survey weekly to report how many beds they have available, and which residents they can serve (i.e. memory care, behavioral health, bariatric, etc.). This tool can be used by facilities, families, hospital discharge planners and the general public to determine bed availability and services throughout the state.

Please access this [training video](#) for instructions on how to complete the survey. The survey can be accessed from this link: [survey](#). If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program via email [LTCOmbudsman@health.mo.gov](mailto:LTCOmbudsman@health.mo.gov) or call 800-309-3282. More information will be coming soon about how to use the data created from the survey.

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## **Navigating the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard in LTC Communities**

In addition to infectious disease, ergonomic, and workplace violence issues, workers in health care settings encounter several other workplace hazards. These include chemicals (e.g., sterilants), hazardous drugs (e.g., antineoplastic drugs), materials that cause allergic reactions (e.g., latex), and sometimes physical agents (e.g., radiation).

The Hazard Communication Standard, also known as the “Right to Know” standard, was enacted by OSHA to ensure that employers and employees are aware of the chemical hazards present in their workplace. The standard provides a comprehensive framework for classifying, labeling, and communicating information about hazardous chemicals to workers. It also requires employers to implement a written hazard communication program and provide training for employees.

**[\(READ MORE\)](#)**

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## **\$40 Million in HUD Funding Available for Service Coordinators**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development recently announced \$40 million in new funding for service coordination programs in affordable senior housing. The grants will fund approximately 160 programs across the country. The deadline to apply for the funding is March 11, and more details on the funding – including eligibility details and allowable uses of the funding – can be found [here](#).

It is important to note that NCAL endorses the [Expanding Service Coordinators Act](#), which would increase funding for and make reforms to service coordinator programs to expand the national service coordinator workforce, which is currently strained. Service coordinators connect individuals and families living in federally

assisted housing with a wide range of social services, including health care, meals, transportation, job training, and education.

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## **Save the Date for Careers in Aging Month**

In the past, AHCA/NCAL and providers across the country have celebrated Careers in Aging Week to bring recognition to the numerous career opportunities available in long term care and aging services and to celebrate current caregivers in the industry. In 2024, they are extending the celebration, and the month of March will now be dedicated to Careers in Aging month! You can join AHCA/NCAL in promoting these rewarding careers for the month-long observation.

Working in long term care provides endless opportunities, including the chance to serve one of our nation's most vulnerable, special populations. The focus in these roles is on treating the whole person, not just a medical condition, and there is amazing potential for career advancement. Along with these benefits and more, working in the long term care community truly improves the lives of millions in positive and supportive work environments. A career in long term care brings a sense of purpose, turns residents and caregivers into family, and can be a great steppingstone to kickstart a successful career in health care.

During Careers in Aging Month, AHCA/NCAL will share stories, resources, and more. You can help them spread the word by retweeting on Twitter or sharing their posts on Facebook and using the hashtag #CareersinCaring. Learn more about [how you can participate](#) or visit [www.careersinaging.com](http://www.careersinaging.com) for more resources.

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## **Save The Date - Diversity Executive Leadership Program Nominations Opening Mid-January**

AHCA/NCAL is gearing up to open nominations for the second class of its Diversity Executive Leadership Program (DELP) on January 14, 2024.

Fifteen exceptional individuals will be selected to participate in the program next year. DELP provides support and access to leadership opportunities for those traditionally underrepresented in long term care.

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be full-time employees of an AHCA/NCAL provider member in good standing.
- Belong to an underrepresented identity group and hold mid- to senior-level or C-suite positions.
- Demonstrate at least three years' experience in mid- to senior-level long-term care management or one year as a C-suite executive.
- Highlight leadership experience in professional, volunteer, or civic/community settings.

During the two-year program, DELP scholars will receive complimentary registration and travel to attend key events. For those ready to embrace this transformative journey, visit the [DELP website](#) for additional information and the application process.

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## **The Center of Excellence for Behavior Health in Nursing Facilities**

Beginning September 2023, the Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health in Nursing Facilities (COE-NF) will host six (6) one-hour monthly cohort sessions. **These sessions are FREE to attend!** Join them for the opportunity to learn industry best practices from other nursing facilities and behavioral health subject matter experts. With the support of COE-NF behavioral health specialists, you will be able to implement the learnings in your facility. The last two cohort sessions are:

**([READ MORE](#))**

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## **Advocacy on the Hill**

As Congress heads home for the holidays, the work of AHCA/NCAL on Capitol Hill has been strong. AHCA/NCAL members accepted the challenge to fight the minimum staffing proposal and have engaged in Washington D.C. and locally from the beginning of 2023 until the end. AHCA/NCAL will finish the year with more than 160 Congressional facility and community tours. Over 70 of these tours were with members of Congress on key committees impacting long term care.

Advocacy efforts also included around 100 AHCA/NCAL members flying into D.C. to participate in Hill visits. During these fly ins, over 225 offices of members of Congress were visited and told about the minimum staffing proposal. These visits included more than 60 offices of members of Congress on key committees impacting long term care.

**([READ MORE](#))**

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## **AHCA Unveils 'Radiant Memories - A Tribute to the Golden Age of Radio' as the 2024 Theme for National Skilled Nursing Care Week**

AHCA has unveiled the theme for National Skilled Nursing Care Week (NSNCW), which will take place from Sunday, May 12 to Saturday, May 18, 2024. The annual, national observance celebrates the essential role that skilled nursing care facilities play in providing safe and effective 24-hour nursing care to millions of individuals each year.

The 2024 theme “Radiant Memories – A Tribute to the Golden Age of Radio” embraces a time when the airwaves resonated with captivating stories and melodies. More than nostalgia, “Radiant Memories” is a call to honor the enduring legacy of skilled nursing facilities. In these facilities, residents and staff contribute to the creation of radiant memories, akin to the cherished moments shared through music and stories over the radio waves.

**([READ MORE](#))**

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## Health Advisory

Please see the DHSS Health Alert entitled, "[Emerging Candida auris Infection Cases in Missouri Health Care Facilities](#)." Should you have any questions, please contact the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at 573-751-6113 or 800-392-0272 (24/7).

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## Missouri's Minimum Wage Rate Will Increase on January 1, 2024

**The minimum wage rate in Missouri for private employers will increase from \$12.00 to \$12.30 per hour effective January 1, 2024.** After 2023, the minimum wage rate for all private and non-exempt businesses will be based on the increase or decrease in the cost of living pursuant to the Consumer Price Index. Employers engaged in retail or service businesses whose annual gross income is less than \$500,000 are not required to pay the state minimum wage rate. Employers not subject to the minimum wage law can pay employees wages of their choosing.

For more information on the minimum wage rate, please click [here](#) to visit the Missouri Department of Labor's website. In addition, all employers subject to any of the provisions of this law must post a summary of the law and regulations in their buildings. For your convenience, the Division of Labor Standards has created a summary Minimum Wage Poster for Missouri employers, which can be accessed [here](#).

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## CNA Testing Events

All Regional dates are viewable on the online calendar at <https://mo.tmutest.com/calendar>. To help with scheduling your testing event, contact Headmaster a few days after the CNA course starts. **IMPORTANT** – these are not the only test sites available. If you need a different testing location, please call Headmaster D&S (1-800-393-8664) and ask for the Missouri Team.

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