

February 23, 2024

Reimbursement Update

We finally have some positive news to report, the \$10 PPD rate increase and the \$.87 increase to the VBP incentive effective July 1, 2023, is finally moving forward. The log jam broke this morning after the final necessary approval was received. As a result, the Emergency Regulation for the increase was filed earlier today.

The state could not begin processing your final rate letters or begin any forward movement toward paying the rate until the Emergency Regulation was approved and filed with the Secretary of State's office. The Emergency regulation will become effective March 6.

Now that the Emergency Regulation has been filed, there is a clearer timeline of when you will receive your new rates and retro payment. Here is the timeline:

1. Final rate letters should be released within the next week and a half. It is unclear at this time whether you will receive one final rate letter referencing both the 7/1/23 rate and the 1/1/24 rate, or if there will be two rate letters (one referencing the 7/1/23 rate and another referencing your 1/1/24 rate). Regardless of whether there is one rate letter or two, you should receive the official rate letter(s) for both the 7/1/23 and 1/1/24 rate adjustments, inclusive of the \$10 increase and \$.87 VBP increase, at the same time.
2. Your new 1/1/24 rate inclusive of the \$10 increase and \$.87 VBP increase should be reflected in your March 19 payment. Unfortunately, in order for the new rates to have been reflected on the first Medicaid payment in March (March 8), the rates would have had to of been keyed in by today.
3. At this juncture, we do not have a date certain for the retro payment back to 7/1/23 for any increases you received to your rate on 7/1/23 and 1/1/24. We are being told the retro payment should come in April. We hope to get an exact date for the retro payment in the next couple weeks.

Please remember, if you have a recoupment owed to the state due to rate reductions as a result of a decrease in your 1/1/23, 7/1/23 and/or 1/1/24 CMI/VBP incentive – that recoupment will be taken out of the \$10 PPD retro payment. In regard to the recoupments, I have been told there are a small number of facilities whose

recoupments were larger than the amount owed to them for the \$10 retro pay. MO HealthNet will work with us on a fair recoupment process for any facilities in that situation.

We understand how frustrating this has been. We also understand how vital this increased funding is to every facility. Please know we have been working on this non-stop, speaking directly to the Medicaid Director weekly if not more, and engaged legislators to put additional pressure on the administration to get this rate increase processed and paid to the facilities. We know this is not over yet because you still have not received the increase; however, there is finally a clear path and timeline to getting this much needed relief. As we learn more regarding the exact date the rate letter(s) will be released and when you can expect to receive your retro payment, we will report that.

Changes to the Adult Abuse and Neglect Online Reporting Application Goes Live on Monday, February 26!

Missouri's Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline online reporting application is being upgraded and the link will change on Monday, February 26. If you have saved the old link, it will no longer work after February 26; however, the online reporting application can still be accessed at [Health.Mo.Gov/abuse](https://www.health.mo.gov/abuse). If you have any questions or concerns, you may send them to DSDSOfficeofConstituentServices@health.mo.gov.

NHSN Posts Upcoming Office Hours and Additional Reminders

The CDC recently posted a [reminder](#) for facilities to log in to the NHSN and make sure that each facility has an active facility administrator. Additionally, the CDC posted a [document](#) with instructions for facilities that need to reassign the administrator role in the NHSN.

Please note that only the facility administrator can enroll a facility in one or more components in the NHSN, reassign the role of facility administrator, and manage/negotiate locations that are used across components. It is important for the facility administrator to maintain access to the NHSN and report data. This will assist with submitting data in advance of reporting deadlines, such as the May 15, 2024, deadline to report annual health care personnel influenza vaccination summary data and the required weekly reporting for the COVID-19 module.

The CDC has scheduled upcoming open office hours for reporting the annual Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Data (registration is required). **REMINDER: Facilities are required to report this data by May 15, 2024, under the Skilled Nursing Facility Quality Reporting Program (SNF QRP) or may face a two percent reduction to their Medicare annual payment update for FY 2025.** Provided below are the upcoming open office hours:

- [Wednesday, February 28 at 1 pm CST](#)
 - [Thursday, March 28 at 1 pm CST](#)
 - [Thursday, April 25 at 1 pm CST](#)
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Skilled Nursing and Therapy Services Covered by Medicare to Maintain Function or Prevent/Slow Decline

On February 8, CMS posted a reminder in the [MLN Connects newsletter](#) that Medicare covers skilled nursing care and skilled therapy services under skilled nursing facility, home health, and outpatient therapy benefits when a beneficiary needs skilled care **to maintain function or to prevent or slow decline**, as long as:

- The beneficiary requires skilled care for the services to be provided safely and effectively.
- An individualized assessment of the patient's condition demonstrates that the specialized judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified therapist are needed for a safe and effective maintenance program.

Providers are encouraged to visit the [CMS Jimmo Settlement Agreement webpage](#) for more information. This webpage was established as part of a 2013 Jimmo v. Sebelius class action lawsuit agreement on behalf of beneficiaries throughout the country who were denied Medicare coverage for skilled care because they were not improving. The settlement confirmed that access to Medicare coverage should be determined based on the beneficiary's need for skilled care, not potential for improvement. However, advocacy groups note that some providers and claim auditors continue to apply a non-existent improvement standard. This notice is an attempt to address this ongoing issue.

Bloodborne Pathogens Standard: Implementing Bloodborne Pathogen/Exposure Control Plan in LTC Facilities

In health care settings, especially LTC facilities, the safety of residents and staff is connected. A clear example involves implementing a comprehensive OSHA-compliant Bloodborne Pathogen (BBP)/Exposure Control Plan (ECP). It's important to emphasize the importance of aligning the BBP ECP with existing infection control plans for resident care. This alignment provides an organized and integrated approach.

The following aims to identify and discuss the key requirements for establishing and implementing an effective ECP with LTC facilities, emphasizing the integration of other infectious disease plans for safeguarding both health care workers and residents.

[\(READ MORE\)](#)

Managing Hazardous Area Compliance - Life Safety Code (LSC)

The Life Safety Code has long required special protections for "hazardous areas". Locations commonly considered under this designation include storage rooms, soiled utility rooms, boiler rooms, maintenance workshops, and bulk laundry areas. While the provisions for these areas have not greatly changed in the Life Safety Code over the years, compliance with the requirements specific to hazardous areas continues to be a top five finding nationally (K-321).

For existing hazardous areas (in place prior to July 2016), these spaces are required to be enclosed with smoke resisting construction (assuming the room is provided with sprinkler protection). This means no louvers, half-walls, open alcoves, or any type of unprotected opening to the corridor. Doors shall be self-closing and positive latching. However, doors are not required to be rated.

If the hazardous area was constructed after July 2016, or the space lacks sprinkler protection, a 1-hour fire resistance rated enclosure is required. This includes a ¾ hour rated door assembly that is self-closing and positive latching.

(READ MORE)

National Skilled Nursing Care Week - Resources and Exclusive Products Now Available



AHCA has announced that resources for this year's National Skilled Nursing Care Week (NSNCW), including the Planning Guide, marketing tools, and special products, are now available at [NSNCW.org](https://www.nscnw.org). These materials are designed to assist you in planning, promoting, and celebrating NSNCW. Discover everything you need to make this week memorable for your residents, staff, and volunteers and to spread joy throughout the community.

Director of Food and Nutrition Services Qualifications

The SLCR recently announced that they have received an influx of questions related to the qualifications for director of food and nutrition services in SNFs. In their listserv, they provided the following information. The federal regulation (F801) requires one of the following qualifications (if a qualified dietician or other clinically qualified nutrition professional is not employed full-time):

- (A) A certified dietary manager; or
- (B) A certified food service manager; or
- (C) Has similar national certification for food service management and safety from a national certifying body; or
- (D) Has an associate's or higher degree in food service management or in hospitality, if the course study includes food service or restaurant management, from an accredited institution of higher learning; or
- (E) Has 2 or more years of experience in the position of director of food and nutrition services in a nursing facility setting and has completed a course of study in food safety and management, by no later than October 1, 2023, that includes topics integral to managing dietary operations including, but

not limited to, foodborne illness, sanitation procedures, and food purchasing/receiving.

CMS has noted that the approved certifications and course requirements would be the equivalent of a ServSafe Food Manager certification. Additional food manager courses found to meet the requirements include the following:

- AAA Food Handler,
- Learn2Serve, and
- State Food Safety.

DHSS Antibiotics Stewardship Survey

The Missouri Antimicrobial Stewardship Educational Collaborative is working with Washington University on an antibiotic stewardship project and are seeking input from long term care facilities and hospitals. The survey can be found at the attached link here: [Survey Link](#). It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

This survey is intended to evaluate the current state of antimicrobial stewardship activities at Missouri long-term care facilities. Please forward it to whomever at your facility is most involved with the antimicrobial stewardship and the management of antimicrobial use, or if no such person exists, your medical director or pharmacy leadership. **The deadline for completing the survey is March 1, 2024.**

For any questions regarding this facility antimicrobial stewardship survey, please submit an email to mo.stewardship@wustl.edu and use “MO DHSS Antimicrobial Stewardship Survey” in the subject line.

New QIPMO Newsletter - February 2024

The Quality Improvement Program for Missouri (QIPMO) has published [MDS Tips and Clinical Pearls \(Volume 11, Issue 2\)](#).

In this issue:

- You Know What They Say About Assuming?!
- ICAR Corner
- Music Soothes the Savage Beast
- Tracheostomy 101

Please visit QIPMO’s website [here](#) for this and other previous newsletters.

Administrator License Renewals

IMPORTANT: Missouri licensed administrators (NHA or RCAL) expiring June 30, 2024, are due for license renewal. If you plan to renew, please visit the BNHA website at <https://health.mo.gov/bnha> for important information regarding continuing education and license renewal.

Once your renewal has been successfully processed, you will be issued a current

license via email. Please note if you fail to renew by June 30, 2024, you cannot practice as a licensed administrator after that date.

MC5 Webinar - The Validation Method: Connect and Communicate with Older Adults

Mark your calendars for this upcoming webinar from MC5! On March 6, [The Validation Method: Connect and Communicate with Older Adults](#) will be offered by Vicki deKlerk, Executive Director, The Validation Institute.

Over 37 years ago, when reality orientation was the norm, Naomi Feil, a woman with unique empathy and insight into the world of disoriented elders, created the Validation Method, motivating older adults with cognitive decline to communicate more, relieve stress, and enhance dignity and happiness in their final stage of life.

Today, the validation method is practiced around the world, and her daughter, Vicki deKlerk, continues her work through the Validation Training Institute, providing education, quality standards and easy pathways for learning this evidence-based method.

Through the magic of Zoom, Vicki will join us from the Netherlands, using interactive exercises, she will describe, demonstrate, and share 2 key prerequisite skills of the Validation Method. There will be an opportunity to share in conversation and engage in a Q & A with attendees. Please click [here](#) to register and learn more.

AHCA/NCAL to Host LTC Workshop Webinar Series

This year, AHCA/NCAL will hold a [webinar series](#) focused on workforce-related matters impacting long term care (LTC) providers across the country. This series will focus on issues including:

- Career ladders,
- Getting more youth interested in the LTC field, and
- Hiring immigrants and refugees.

During this series, attendees will hear directly from provider members – including AHCA/NCAL workforce committee members – and other experts on these matters and best practices from their experiences. It will also be an opportunity to get pressing questions answered. The first webinar in this series will occur on **Friday, March 1 at 2 pm CST** and is entitled “*Building the Path: Creating Careers in Long Term Care*”. Please click [here](#) to register.

Information will be shared on the other webinars throughout the year. For questions about this webinar series, please contact AHCA’s AVP of Workforce and Constituency Services, [Dana Ritchie](#), and AHCA’s Senior Director of Quality Improvement, [Urvi Patel](#).

The Center of Excellence for Behavior Health in Nursing Facilities

The COE-NF also released new trainings for the month of February that offers Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) credits. The COE-NF also continues to provide [tailored technical assistance](#), such as an individualized plan to assist your facility with specific behavioral health needs to include training as needed.

Upcoming February Training Sessions:

- [An Introduction to Substance Use Disorders](#) - February 29 from 1-2 pm CST

The COE-NF has [on-demand training videos](#), which includes bite-sized learnings and longer video modules with pre/posttests on topics such as Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Mental Health, Substance Use, Trauma Informed Care, and Alcohol Use Disorder. They also offer a wide array of resources on a multitude of mental health topics via the [resource hub](#).

Other Links:

- [The Center of Excellence Fact Sheet](#)
- [Sign up for the monthly newsletter](#)

Assisted Living Webinar Series - The New Generation and the Challenges they Face

Assisted Living is going through a period of change. Is your facility ready? This webinar series, led by Speaker Barbara Speedling, will discuss topics including caring for the new generation in assisted living, overcoming social isolation and loneliness, preventing resident-to-resident aggression, and leadership in a transformative culture. AHCA/NCAL members can purchase individual webinars for \$25 each, or bundle and save by purchasing all four webinars now at the discounted rate of \$90.

- **Wednesday, April 17 at 1 pm CST – [Caring for a New Generation in Assisted Living](#)**
- **Wednesday, June 12 at 1 pm CST – [All by Myself: Overcoming Social Isolation and Loneliness in Assisted Living](#)**
- **Wednesday, August 14 at 1 pm CST – [Love Your Neighbor: Preventing Resident-to-Resident Aggression](#)**
- **Wednesday, October 16 at 1 pm CST – [Metamorphosis: Leadership in a Transformative Culture](#)**

CNA Testing Events

All regional dates are viewable on the online calendar at <https://mo.tmutest.com/calendar>. **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.

PLEASE NOTE: There have been changes to scheduling tests through TMU and to the paperwork for RN Observers. Please reach out to Headmaster with questions. missouri@hdmaster.com.

Knowledge and Skill testing is available March 11 at MHCA. Please contact shellie@mohealthcare.com to reserve a time slot.

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