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# NDLTCA Newsletter

## August 5, 2025

**All Members - *All Members***  
**Assisted Living - *AL***  
**Basic Care and Adult Residential - *BC***  
**Nursing Facilities - *NF***

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## Education

### Upcoming Webinar on WEDNESDAY: Navigating the Nursing Classification – What You Need to Know

NF

Don't miss the second session in our *Mastering MDS Classification and PDPM Calculation* series—created for MDS Nurses and IDT team members.

 **Wednesday, August 6 @ 11:30 a.m.**

Topic: **Navigating the Nursing Classification items**

 Duration: 1 hour (includes Q&A)

 *Missed the July 16 and July 30 sessions?*

Watch the recording here: [View Recording](#)

 **Save the Date for the final session pulling the items together:**

- **August 20 @ 11:30 a.m. – *Pulling it All Together: Calculating Reimbursement Under PDPM***

 Need a Microsoft Teams invite? Contact Peggy at [peggy@ndltca.org](mailto:peggy@ndltca.org).

 Please share this opportunity with your MDS and IDT teams!

# AAPACN RAC-CT® Certification Workshop | August 12-14

*NF*

August 12–14, 2025 | 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM CT Daily

 Courtyard Bismarck North | [3319 N 14th St, Bismarck, ND](#)

With the upcoming transition to PDPM, it's more important than ever that your MDS coordinators are confident in their assessment skills and documentation practices. Accurate, complete MDS coding is essential for ensuring appropriate reimbursement.

**If you have a newer team member or if your facility doesn't routinely manage Medicare stays**, this training is especially valuable. This course prepares staff not only to meet the demands of PDPM but also lays the foundation for RAC-CT certification, the nationally recognized standard of MDS competency.

NDLTCA offers this opportunity once a year, and currently, we have just two registrants from North Dakota. We encourage you to consider whether your staff could benefit from participating.

 [Learn More and Register Here](#)

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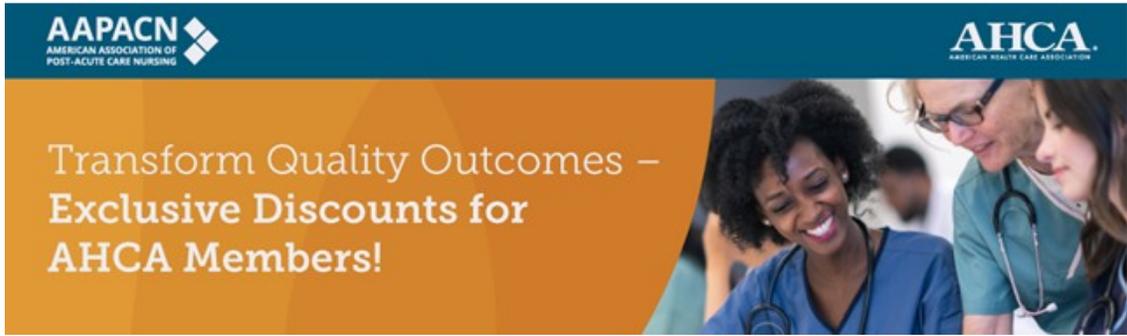
## Quality

**NOW OPEN – National Quality Award Program Intent to Apply!**

*All Members*

The [2026 National Quality Award](#) Intent to Apply (ITA) is now open! All applicants who plan to apply for an AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award are encouraged to submit an ITA by logging into the [Quality Award portal](#) before the deadline on **November 13, 2025, at 7 PM CT.**

[Submit Your Intent to Apply](#)



## Quality Measures Rescue Guide

*NF*

Transform quality outcomes with the QM Rescue Guide, designed to help facility leaders review and enhance their QMs. This downloadable PDF includes 18 comprehensive audit tools to identify the root of the problem. The guide offers a comprehensive overview of QMs, details how they are measures, how to evaluate each measure from a clinician's perspective, and actionable steps to drive improvement and achieve better results and much more: [Register here](#)

**Member Price: \$68**

# Regulatory

## Summary of FY26 SNF Final Payment Rule

*NF*

Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the [final rule](#) for the skilled nursing facility (SNF) prospective payment system (PPS) fiscal year (FY) 2026. AHCA has reviewed the final rule and developed a [summary](#) outlining key provisions and impacts on members. *Please note this is for members only and requires an AHCA/NCAL log-in to view.*

As a reminder, the final rule:

- **Increased rates by 3.2%**, or approximately \$1.16 billion, beginning October 1, 2025.
- Finalized several substantive changes to the PDPM ICD-10 code mappings.
- Removed four items previously adopted as standardized patient assessment data elements under the social determinants of health category beginning with the FY 2027 SNF Quality Reporting Program (QRP).
- Amended the SNF QRP and Value-Based Purchasing Program reconsideration policies and processes.

**Please contact AHCA SVP of Reimbursement Policy [John Kane](#) with questions.**

SNF PPS Final Rule Webinar: AHCA will be hosting a [webinar](#) next Thursday, August 7 at 2:30 PM CST where president and CEO Clif Porter and AHCA team members will provide details on what you need to know about the payment rule. Registration is free for AHCA/NCAL members. Questions about registration, how to join the webinar, or additional assistance request should be sent to [educate@ahca.org](mailto:educate@ahca.org).

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# ND DHHS Seeks Input on Medicaid Waiver

*All Members*

Public comment is sought on an amendment to the state's Medicaid 1915(c) waiver for home and community-based (HCBS) services. The waiver pays for a variety of HCBS that allow individuals who otherwise qualify for nursing home care to remain living in their homes and communities. The purpose of the amendment is to implement changes in services and programming to improve access to HCBS and update language changes related to internal processes. [Comments accepted thru Aug. 21, 2025.](#)

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## Please thank Senator Cramer for his support!

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Senator Cramer met with Dr. Oz last week regarding federal deregulation efforts for nursing homes. According to the Senator's staff, the message came through loud and clear: the Senator is deeply frustrated with the retaliatory and punitive nature of the current regulatory environment. He drew parallels to the federal energy regulatory system and expressed support for state primacy as a more effective approach. The information was discussed at a very high level, but they touched on COVID, FRIs, IJs, etc. Dr. Oz and his team were open to continued discussion, and the Senator's team is eager to keep the pressure on and push for action. **Dr. Oz's staff will meet in-person with the NDLTCA Board and staff on Aug. 27th to continue the discussion.**



Senator Kevin Cramer 

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For too long, overzealous bureaucrats and unnecessary regulations have exacerbated staffing and access challenges for nursing home facilities, hurting residents across the country. Thank you [CMS Administrator Dr. Oz](#) for meeting with me on the lessons we've learned in rural America and the needed reforms to improve care for North Dakotans.



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## AHCA Regulatory Updates

*All Members*

### **AHCA Requests Updated 2025 MA Member Data**

AHCA is re-releasing its Medicare Advantage data initiative for 2025. AHCA members are asked to share MA data for August 2025 and/or September 2025 to support continued efforts to assess how plans are implementing new regulations. [Read More](#)

### **AHCA/NCAL Supports Telehealth Access Protection Efforts**

AHCA recently signed a letter to DEA Administrator Terry Cole requesting his leadership ensure that millions of Americans continue to have access to medically necessary health care through telemedicine. [Read More](#)

### **CDC Posts FY 2026 ICD-10-CM Guidelines for Coding and Reporting Effective 10/1/2025**

The FY 2026 ICD-10-CM update adds 487 new diagnosis codes, revises 38 codes, and removes 28 codes. The updated guidelines and changes to codes are to be used for resident stays occurring from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026. [Read more.](#) [Preorder the newly updated 2026 ICD-10-CM.](#)

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## Inside PDPM Coach: How to Maximize Your Reimbursement with Real-Time Verification

*NF*

Skilled Nursing News By [Jack Silverstein](#) | April 18, 2025

In the ever-evolving landscape of senior care, the growing emphasis on value-based care and its significant benefits for skilled nursing facilities (SNF) has gained substantial momentum. Yet even after more than five years since the implementation of the Patient-Driven Payment Model (PDPM), skilled care providers still have their work cut out for them. [Read more...](#)

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## Assisted Living

### NCAL Executive Director Discusses Advocacy In Assisted Living

*AL and BC*

In a video interview for [Provider Magazine](#) (7/24, 151K), National Center for Assisted Living Executive Director LaShuan Bethea "spoke with Provider Magazine Editor In Chief Debbie Stadtler to explore why advocacy is critical in assisted living, NCAL's policy priorities, and how providers can get involved." Bethea also "highlighted that building relationships is a key part of advocacy at any level and with a variety of stakeholders."

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# Behavioral Health

## COE- Behavioral Health in NF - Beyond Consults: Embedding Behavioral Health in Post-Acute Care Teams

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Thursday, August 14, 2025

6-7 p.m. EST

ACCME & NAB CREDITS WILL BE OFFERED

Moving beyond traditional consult-only models, presenters will share practical strategies for embedding behavioral health as a core component of interdisciplinary teams. Through a conversational format and opportunities for audience participation, attendees will gain evidence-based insights and actionable approaches to support sustainable, team-based behavioral health care in post-acute and long-term care settings. [Register here](#)

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## Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health in NF Ends Sept. 29, 2025

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McKnight's August 4, 2025 by [Kimberly Marselas](#)

The Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health in Nursing Facilities announced last week that its grant funding will run out Sept. 29, leaving only its extensive online tools for providers. Live technical consultations and new trainings will cease, with no clear replacement even as the number of residents with mental health and substance use disorders explodes. [Read more...](#)

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## Antipsychotics pose risks for nearly 9 in 10 older users, major study finds

*All Members*

McKnight's July 28, 2025 by [Alicia Lasek](#)

Prescribing antipsychotics for older people with dementia can be a balancing act for clinicians who aim to provide quality care while mitigating the health risks of these drugs. A [new study](#) underscores that challenge, finding that almost 9 in 10 older antipsychotic users have at least one measure of high-risk use. [Read more...](#)

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## F605 Update--Gradual Dose Reduction for Nursing Homes

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Earlier this year, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued revised guidance under F605, sharpening its focus on the misuse of psychotropic medications as chemical restraints and reinforcing the importance of gradual dose reduction (GDR) as a clinical and regulatory safeguard. These updates have direct implications for how nursing homes prescribe, monitor, and reduce psychotropic drugs—particularly when these medications are used to manage behaviors that could otherwise be addressed through individualized care and non-pharmacologic interventions. Let's review key action items... [Read more...](#)

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