



NDLTCA Newsletter

December 16, 2025

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

HHS Update

LTC Ombudsman Program Update

All Members

The Ombudsman team has expanded with the addition of Jacqueline Reed and the creation of a new geographic zone. As a result, some facilities have been reassigned to different ombudsmen. Please review the updated assignments at the link below.

[Ombudsman Assignment Spreadsheet by Facility](#)

Workforce

USCIS Increases Screening and Vetting of Foreign Nationals

All Members

On December 4, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that it has updated its [Policy Manual](#) to reduce the maximum validity period for Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) for certain categories of foreign nationals. This update also incorporates changes to EAD validity periods made by recent legislation.

According to a [USCIS press release](#) on the announcement, the reduced maximum validity periods for certain categories will result in more frequent vetting of foreign nationals who apply

for authorization to work in the United States.

The maximum validity period for initial and renewal EADs will be changed from 5 years back to 18 months for several categories of foreign nationals:

- Admitted as refugees;
- Granted asylum;
- Granted withholding of deportation or removal;
- Pending applications for asylum or withholding of removal;
- Pending applications for adjustment of status under [INA 245](#); and
- Pending applications for suspension of deportation, cancellation of removal, or relief under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act.

This change affects foreign nationals with applications for employment authorization that are pending or filed on or after Dec. 5, 2025, and based on any of the above categories. The USCIS update also included information on changes required in H.R. 1 – the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed into law on July 4, 2025. More details can be found on the USCIS site [here](#).

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Education

Coming in 2026: Year-Long Webinar Series to Support LTC Excellence

NF

We're excited to announce **three comprehensive, year-long virtual webinar series launching in January 2026**, designed to support long-term care leaders and teams in navigating today's regulatory, clinical, and operational challenges.

These monthly sessions offer practical guidance, expert insights, and actionable tools you can apply immediately—without adding stress to your busy schedule.

Survey & Clinical Risk Management

January–December 2026

This year-long virtual series equips LTC leaders, clinicians, and staff with the knowledge and

skills needed to stay compliant, improve quality outcomes, and strengthen survey readiness. Each monthly session focuses on a critical area of operational or clinical risk, blending regulatory guidance with practical strategies for real-world implementation. Participants will gain tools to enhance facility performance, reduce risk, and approach surveys with confidence.

DON Playbook: Skills for Today's LTC Nurse Leader

January–December 2026

Designed specifically for Directors of Nursing and nurse leaders, this monthly series focuses on the core competencies of effective DON leadership. Topics include leading teams, building strong systems for key tasks, and mastering the QAPI approach to drive outcomes. Each session is a mini-workshop led by experienced nurse leaders, offering practical strategies to reduce stress, address high-risk issues, and bring clarity and confidence to the DON role—while supporting residents and staff with excellence.

TEAM MDS! Insights & Coaching for Quality Coding and PDPM Success

January–December 2026

This 12-part monthly webinar and coaching series strengthens MDS teams through hands-on lessons in coding accuracy, documentation, and PDPM success. Each session covers a high-impact topic such as GG items, ICD-10 sequencing, common coding errors, care planning, and the financial impact of MDS on reimbursement, quality measures, and survey readiness. With expert teaching, real-world case examples, and coaching, participants will build confidence, improve compliance, and enhance interdisciplinary collaboration.



Watch for an upcoming email with more details and registration links.

Don't miss this opportunity to invest in your team and set your organization up for success in 2026!

Navigating Everyday Life for People Living with Dementia

All Members

A FREE virtual learning opportunity for providers, healthcare professionals and caregivers of people living with dementia.

Thursday, January 22, 2026 | Noon - 4 p.m. CT

- 12:05 - 1 p.m. Activity Planning for People Living with Dementia Julie Praska-Moser, BS
- 1:10 - 2 p.m. Intimacy and Dementia Maggie Syme, PhD
- 2:10 - 3 p.m. Navigating Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (iADLs) with People Living with Dementia Megan Dooley, OTD
- 3:10 - 4 p.m. Exercise and Dementia Ryan McGrath, PhD

[Register Online](#)

Regulatory

CMS Formalizes Indefinite Suspension of SNF Provider Enrollment Revalidation Deadline

NF

As shared earlier this month, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) informed AHCA that the mandatory off-cycle SNF provider enrollment revalidation deadline of January 1, 2026, has been suspended indefinitely. CMS posted a formal notice in the [December 11,](#)

[2025, MLN Connects Newsletter](#), sharing that it “will provide additional information in future updates to this guidance.”

Key CMS links providing additional details:

- [Guidance for SNF Attachment on Form CMS-855A \(PDF\)](#)
- [Medicare Enrollment for Providers & Suppliers](#)

AHCA has been relentlessly advocating to CMS about this issue, and we appreciate the agency granting our request for relief given the many difficulties providers have faced recently and throughout the process.

Learn more about what SNF providers should do next.

[Read more](#)

CMS Shares Updated Medicaid Income, Resource Standards

NF

MCKNIGHTS The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced Medicaid income and resource standards that will go into effect Jan. 1.

Certain income and resource standards are adjusted beginning each January in accordance with changes in the Supplemental Security Income federal benefit rate and Consumer Price Index, CMS Deputy Administrator Dan Brillman wrote in an [informational bulletin](#) that provided updated SSI and spousal impoverishment standards for 2026.

[Read more](#)

ICD-10-CM Updates Impacting Long Term Care

NF

PROVIDER MAGAZINE On October 1, 2025, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), National Center for Health Statistics, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised the *ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting*, as well as the code set. The updates to the guidelines for coding and reporting using the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-10-CM) system include 487 new codes and 38 revised codes. Twenty-eight codes have been deleted.¹

Also, there are several revisions and additions to, as well as deletions from, the Alphabetic Index and Tabular List related to spelling corrections and grammatical and punctuation changes. Adjustments were made to instructional notes and guidance, as well. The ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting added to the conventions for the ICD-10-CM and provide new general and chapter-specific coding guidelines.

[Read more](#)

Quality

Don't Miss the 2026 National Quality Award Application Deadline

All Members

Next year marks a special milestone – the 30th anniversary of the [AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program!](#) For three decades, this program has helped long term and post-acute care providers strengthen their systems, improve outcomes, and celebrate excellence in care.

If you are planning to apply for a 2026 National Quality Award, please remember that applications are due by **January 22, 2026, at 7:00 PM CT.**

WHAT IF WE DIDN'T SUBMIT AN INTENT TO APPLY (ITA)?

You can still apply! The ITA is not mandatory. While submitting an ITA provides benefits like discounted application fees and additional resources, it is not required to submit a Bronze, Silver, or Gold application.

WHY APPLY?

Whether this is your first time applying or you are advancing to the next level, participating in the National Quality Award Program can:

- Help you identify strengths and opportunities for improvement;
- Support better outcomes for residents and staff;
- Recognize your team's hard work and commitment to quality; and
- Highlight your organization as a leader in long term and post-acute care.

ACTION NEEDED:

Log into the [Quality Award Portal](#) to complete your application, then submit it no later than January 22, 2026, at 7:00 PM CT. We encourage you not to wait until the last minute in case you encounter any technical or internal delays.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to quality. We look forward to celebrating our 30th anniversary year by recognizing providers like you who go above and beyond for the individuals you serve.

Questions? Contact qualityaward@ahca.org.



Contact us at 701-222-0660 or email Nikki at nikki@ndltca.org or Peggy at peggy@ndltca.org.