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# NDLTCA Newsletter

## January 20, 2026

All Members - *All Members*  
Assisted Living - *AL*  
Basic Care and Adult Residential - *BC*  
Care at Home - *CH*

## NDLTCA Updates



### Vanessa Raile is Retiring!

*All Members*

I wanted to share some bittersweet news with our membership.

Vanessa will be retiring from NDLTCA after many years of service. Her official retirement date will be Tuesday, March 31, 2026, with her retirement effective April 1, 2026.

Vanessa's impact on long term care in North Dakota has been significant. She played a critical role in helping facilities navigate CMS emergency preparedness requirements when they were first implemented and was a steady, trusted presence for providers throughout the COVID-19

pandemic—arguably the most challenging period our sector has ever faced. Even as much of the world moved on, long term care continued to experience very real and ongoing challenges, and Vanessa remained deeply engaged alongside our members.

Her work has led to lasting improvements in emergency preparedness across skilled nursing, basic care, and assisted living, leaving a strong foundation that continues to benefit facilities statewide.

On both a personal and professional level, I am deeply grateful for Vanessa’s leadership, institutional knowledge, and calm, thoughtful approach—especially during times of change. She has been a constant support to our members and to our team, and her commitment to a “facilities first” philosophy has always been evident.

Please join me in thanking Vanessa for her nearly decade-long dedication to NDLTCA and in wishing her all the best in retirement. She will be deeply missed.

For those attending our membership meeting next week, we invite you to arrive a bit early for a casual social beginning at **1:00 p.m.** This will be an opportunity to connect with Vanessa and colleagues, share a few conversations, and spend some informal time together ahead of the meeting.

We hope to see you there.

Nikki

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## Care at Home Member Update

*CH*

NDLTCA continues to build momentum with our growing Care at Home membership, including home care, home health, and hospice providers across the state. As this membership category continues to take shape, our focus is on ensuring your voice is represented in policy

discussions, workforce conversations, and broader system planning alongside facility-based care.

In the months ahead, we will be convening the Care at Home Committee to help identify shared priorities and inform coordinated advocacy efforts moving into the next legislative cycle.

Thank you for being part of this expanding and essential component of long term care in North Dakota. We look forward to continued collaboration and engagement.

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## Remarkable Women

### *All Members*

We are proud to recognize Beverly Unrath, a new member of our Care at Home community, who was recently featured as a 2024 Remarkable Woman by KX News for her leadership and impact in North Dakota.

Bev's work with Dakota Home Care, where she serves as owner and CEO, has helped expand

access to in-home services across the region.

Bev's experience and perspective contributed to important discussions within NDLTCA about how Care at Home services fit within the long term care continuum. We appreciate her support over the years as a sponsor and her leadership within the broader care continuum.

Read more about Bev's journey and accomplishments in the full KX News profile: ["Remarkable Women: Catching up with 2024 winner Beverly Unrath."](#)

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## Education

### SERVSAFE MANAGER COURSE – Approved for ND and MN:

#### *All Members*

ServSafe® Certification Course and Exam held in Grand Forks, ND. Book and course materials will be mailed to the participant after payment is received.

Please make check or money order payable to: DEBORAH STRAND. There are only 35 spots for the class so be sure to register early.

\*This class will include the approved MN 4-hour renewal.

**Date: April 21, 2026**

**Deadline to register is March 27, 2026.**

[Click here to register](#)

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

*NF*



Begins January 27, 2026



<https://ndltca.swoogo.com/teammds>

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*All Members*



## Navigating Everyday Life for People Living with Dementia

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

### Schedule

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

[bit.ly/49bweT0](https://bit.ly/49bweT0)



For additional information contact Bethany Reed at [Bethany.Reed@UND.edu](mailto:Bethany.Reed@UND.edu)

Upon Completion of this program the learner will be able to:

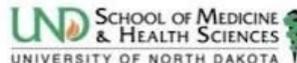
- Design meaningful daily activity plans tailored to individual needs and improve overall quality of life.
- Develop effective strategies for supporting daily living activities in individuals with dementia.
- Discuss the role of intimacy and emotional connection in dementia care.
- Integrate physical activity into dementia care plans, recognizing the benefits of exercise for people living with dementia.

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the Accreditation Requirements and Policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Alzheimer's Association MN ND Chapter and the Alzheimer's Association SD Chapter. The University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences is accredited by the ACCME to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences designates this Live activity for a maximum of 3 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nursing, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy may use the credit for certification. Department of Geriatrics, UND is a board-approved provider as approved by North Dakota Board of Social Worker Examiners. This is approved for 3 face-to-face contact hours.

The Dakota Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$5M. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.



24/7 Helpline 800.272.3900

[alz.org/mnnd](https://alz.org/mnnd)

# Regulatory

## Administrative Hours reported in PBJ are **ONLY** for the Licensed Administrator

*NF*

In the most recently available quarter (Quarter 2 2025), it was noted that a number of facilities are not completing the Administration portion of PBJ correctly. Inconsistencies within North Dakota were mostly noted with standalone facilities as evidenced by more than 8 hours noted on a day and fractions of hours noted on days indicating that non-exempt people were assigned to that category.

For regulatory purposes, “administrator” refers only to the **licensed** nursing facility administrator who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the facility. Time worked by individuals who are not the licensed administrator does not meet this requirement. Please ensure your staffing and PBJ submissions accurately reflect these requirements to avoid potential compliance issues.

If you have questions about how this applies to your specific situation, feel free to reach out, [nikki@ndltca.org](mailto:nikki@ndltca.org).

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## Upcoming OASIS-E2 Implementation

*CH*

CMS has released updated OASIS-E2 data specifications and guidance applicable starting **April 1, 2026**, with changes to item sets and edits that will impact home health data submission and

quality reporting.

[For this update and more, click here...](#)

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## **CMS Releases FY 2026 State Performance Standards System (SPSS) Guidance**

*HH and NF*

For Medicare/Medicaid-certified providers:

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released the [Fiscal Year 2026 State Performance Standard System Guidance](#) which outlines how State Survey Agencies will be evaluated on survey and certification activities conducted on behalf of CMS.

There are three domains for the FY26 SPSS measures. These measures include the following:

- Survey and Intake Process
- Survey and Intake Quality
- Noncompliance Resolution

CMS acknowledges the impact of the federal government shutdown from October 1, 2025, through November 12, 2025, and is adjusting the evaluation of several FY 2026 measures. Measures directly impacted will receive an exception. These exceptions apply only to FY 2026 and will not be carried forward.

More information and a detailed breakdown of the measures can be found in the CMS memo. Questions may be directed to [regulatory@ahca.org](mailto:regulatory@ahca.org).

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## Assisted Living

### CMS Introduces MAHA ELEVATE Model to Address Chronic Disease through Whole-Person Care

*AL*

MAHA ELEVATE offers assisted living (AL) providers an opportunity to participate directly or through partnerships with organizations delivering whole-person, lifestyle-focused care. Providers can leverage AL infrastructure to launch structured programs that support chronic disease prevention and functional wellness.

[Read more...](#)

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## Workforce

### U.S. Department of Labor Announces \$145 Million in Apprenticeship Funding

*All Members*

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) recently released a [forecast notice](#) announcing the upcoming availability of \$145 million in funding to support a pay-for-performance incentive payments program to further expand the national apprenticeship system. The anticipated post date for the grant application is Jan 29, 2026, and the estimated application due date is March 20, 2026.

[Read more...](#)

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## Partnering Association Updates

### **Nominate Your Environmental Service Professional for NDESA's Best Service Award!**

*AL, BC, NF*

Do you know an outstanding laundry, housekeeping, or maintenance employee whose characteristics exemplify his/her dedication and service to the field of environmental services? The **North Dakota Environmental Service Association** is accepting nominations for the **2026 Best Service Award**, to be presented at the **NDLTCA 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Awards Gala on Wednesday, May 6**. The individual must be a member of NDESA.

[Click here for the nomination form](#)

[Click here for the NDESA membership form](#)

**Deadline:** February 9, 2026

**Submit to:** [mmedrud@rccnd.org](mailto:mmedrud@rccnd.org)

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### **Nominate Your Activity Professional for North Dakota's Activity Professional of the Year!**

*All Members*

Do you know an outstanding Activity Professional who **STRIVES TO CONSTANTLY IMPROVE ACTIVITY PROGRAMS AND TO AID IN THE CHALLENGE OF FINDING NEW, EXCITING AND MEANINGFUL ACTIVITIES?** The **Activity Professionals of North Dakota (APND)** is

accepting nominations for the **2026 Activity Professional of the Year Award**, to be presented at the **NDLTCA 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Awards Gala on Wednesday, May 6.**

[Click here for the nomination form](#)

**Deadline: February 2, 2026**

**Submit to: [krhone@mchsnd.org](mailto:krhone@mchsnd.org)**

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## **Nominate Your CDM for ND ANFP Certified Dietary**

### **Manager of the Year!**

*All Members*

Do you know an outstanding CDM who excels in customer service, attitude, professionalism, volunteerism, and teamwork?

Now's your chance to celebrate them! The **North Dakota Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ND ANFP)** is accepting nominations for the **2026 Certified Dietary Manager of the Year Award**, to be presented at the **NDLTCA 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Awards Gala on Wednesday, May 6.**

[Click here for the nomination form](#)

**Deadline: January 31, 2026**

**Submit to: [zimbelmanmelanie@yahoo.com](mailto:zimbelmanmelanie@yahoo.com)**

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## **Nominate Your Social Worker for LTCSWND Social Worker of the Year!**

*All Members*

Do you know an outstanding Social Worker so goes above and beyond?

Now's your chance to celebrate them! The **Long Term Care Social Workers of North Dakota (LTCSWND)** is accepting nominations for the **2026 Social Worker of the Year**, to be presented at the **NDLTCA 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention Awards Gala on Wednesday, May 6.**

[Click here for the nomination form](#)

**Deadline:** January 31, 2026

**Submit to:** [kgustavson@stanleyhealth.org](mailto:kgustavson@stanleyhealth.org)

Be sure to renew their membership with LTCSWND. **Here is a link to the form,** <https://ndltca.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Membership-Form-2025-updated.rtf>

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## **Insurance**

### **BCBSND Caring Foundation accepting applications for Health Innovation Grants**

*All Members*

The Caring Foundation is now accepting letters of intent for our Health Innovation Grants for up to \$50,000 in funding for nonprofits, municipalities, park boards or schools. These Health Innovation Grants are projects or programming proposals that are new or expanding, innovative and could be replicated by others if found successful.

If you know of an organization that would benefit from this grant, you can share the link below to help encourage them to apply.

[View Grant Info](#)

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## In the News

### Long Term Care 2026 Trends and Outlook

*All Members*

Provider Magazine - Steve Manning 1/20/2026

With the new year comes a long-awaited demographic milestone: in 2026, the oldest baby boomers finally turn 80, heralding the [silver tsunami](#) that promises to reshape senior living. Over the coming year, providers will face intense pressures and foster exciting innovations as they strive to deliver quality care to the next generation of customers.

[Read more...](#)

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### Number Of Older Adults Caring For Fellow Older Adults Expected To Rise

*All Members*

The [Washington Post](#) (1/15, Najmabadi, 10.52M) reports caring for an aging person "raises a separate set of challenges for spouses," who are "typically seniors themselves – close to half are 75 or older – and they are more likely to be caring for someone with long-term health challenges, according to a 2025 [report](#) [PDF] from the National Alliance for Caregiving and"

AARP. Furthermore, the share "of older adults caring for fellow older adults are only expected to increase as lifespans lengthen and family sizes shrink."

[Read more...](#)



Contact us at 701-222-0660 or email Nikki at [nikki@ndltca.org](mailto:nikki@ndltca.org) or Peggy at [peggy@ndltca.org](mailto:peggy@ndltca.org).