

# Meeting summary for OHCA Assisted living member call (06/25/2025)

## Quick recap

The meeting covered updates on federal and state budget developments, including potential impacts on Medicaid funding and assisted living rates. Discussions also addressed changes to satisfaction surveys, the development of voluntary guidelines for assisted living through the QUARK collaborative, and updates for assisted living waiver providers. Additionally, the meeting provided information on critical access rate applications, a new recruitment-focused video series, and nursing home administrator license renewals.

## Next steps

- [Assisted living providers to watch for updates on personal needs allowance changes in the state budget.](#)
- [Assisted living providers to prepare for satisfaction surveys starting in August, including both resident and family surveys.](#)
- [Assisted living providers to look out for the release of updated satisfaction survey instruments from the Department of Aging.](#)
- [Assisted living waiver providers to email Meredith Finley with the name and email address of the person who will upload documentation for the critical access rate attestation.](#)
- [LeadingAge Ohio members to review the "People Worth Caring About" docuseries on the LeadingAge Ohio website.](#)
- [Nursing home administrators to be aware of new license renewal requirements, including increased CE credits \(40\) for renewals after December 31, 2025.](#)
- [Nursing staff to be aware that uploading CEs to the Ohio Board of Nursing system is no longer required for license renewal.](#)

## Summary

### Monthly Assisted Living Member Update

Pete welcomed attendees to the monthly assisted living member call and provided updates on recent developments. He noted that attendance might be lower due to summer activities and mentioned evolving news stories that would be discussed. The meeting was set to begin after a brief wait for additional participants.

### Federal Budget Reconciliation Bill Update

Debbie provided an update on the federal budget reconciliation bill, highlighting differences between the House and Senate versions. The Senate's proposal includes reducing the maximum provider tax rate from 6% to 3.5% by fiscal year 27, which would impact Ohio's hospital provider tax increases planned in the state

budget. Debbie expressed concern about the potential impact on Medicaid funding and service eligibility, noting that Ohio had recently increased assisted living service rates. She also mentioned that the Senate version maintains concerning language regarding a waiver for Ohio's managed care provider tax, which may no longer be allowed under CMS rules.

#### Medicaid Bill Timeline and Differences

Debbie explained the differences in Medicaid retroactive eligibility between the House and Senate versions of the bill, noting that the Senate version allows for 2 months for non-expansion populations, which is better than the House's 1-month limit but still concerning. She outlined the process for the bill's completion, including the need for Senate Finance's Medicaid provisions to be ruled allowable under the Byrd rule, followed by Senate and House votes before final passage. Debbie acknowledged the tight timeline with only 8 days until July 4th, but noted that the House had previously completed legislation in 24-hour sessions, suggesting the Senate might do the same.

#### Budget Updates and State Finances

Debbie announced that the team will continue to provide updates on the Federal budget and reconciliation process through weekly news bytes. Pete discussed the current state budget situation in Ohio, noting that it is significantly different from the previous budget due to reduced revenues and a focus on tax cuts, which has limited funding for services and initiatives.

#### Medicaid Budget and Rate Challenges

Pete discussed the challenging budget environment, noting that while Medicaid funding was reduced by 1% in the first year and 1.5% in the second year, there were no rate increases for providers, including assisted living facilities. He explained that their initial proposal for a modest rate increase and a future rate review process was not successful in the House, leading to a more limited proposal of a 2% rate increase in the second year and a rate review, which was also not accepted. The budget process concluded with a conference committee report, reflecting the final decisions made by leadership and the administration, despite the committee consisting of named individuals.

#### Budget Conference and PNA Controversy

The conference report for the budget was passed with a party-line vote, with Republicans supporting it and Democrats opposing it, marking the first time since 2001 that Democrats have uniformly voted against the budget. The report did not address rate changes for assisted living, as there was no point of difference between the two houses. However, the personal needs allowance (PNA) for residents in Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) and assisted living waiver residents was a point of contention, with the House reducing the proposed increase from \$100 to \$75 and changing the statute to cover SNFs and ICFs but not assisted living. The Senate removed the PNA increase altogether, leading to confusion and further discussion, with Director McElroy emphasizing her role in initiating the PNA increase proposal.

## Medicaid Budget and Provider Rates

Pete discussed the uncertainty surrounding the budget for Medicaid expenditures, noting that while the funding aims to benefit assisted living residents, it could potentially lead to rate cuts for providers. He highlighted the significance of the hospital tax increase in the Federal legislation, which, while providing additional funding for hospitals, also acts as a backstop for the Medicaid program. Pete expressed concern that if the hospital tax is not maintained, it could jeopardize rate increases for Medicaid providers, including those in assisted living, and emphasized the need for vigilance in monitoring these developments.

## Budget, Surveys, and Assisted Living Guidelines

Pete provided updates on several key topics. He noted that while the state budget situation is concerning, with a potential for work and advocacy ahead, it is expected to be signed by the end of the month. Pete also discussed changes to the satisfaction survey process, which will now include both resident and family surveys conducted contemporaneously, with results released semi-annually. Lastly, he mentioned the ongoing work of the Quality and Assisted Living Collaborative (QUARK), a national group developing voluntary guidelines for assisted living, with a draft on emergency preparedness expected soon. Pete emphasized that any guidelines not supported by all state affiliates would not be endorsed by NCal.

## Assisted Living Waiver Updates Meeting

The meeting covered several updates and reminders for assisted living waiver providers. Erin discussed the process for applying for the critical access rate, emphasizing the need to email Meredith Finley by June 20th to get access to the Share File system for documentation submission. She also announced the launch of a new Docu series, "People Worth Caring About," available on the website, with workbooks for recruitment efforts planned in the future. Tammy provided clarity on nursing home administrator license renewals, explaining the new renewal cycles and CE requirements for 2025 and beyond. Pete introduced Tammy, a new team member, as a resource for questions about assisted living rules and other topics. The next meeting was scheduled for the end of July.

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