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## **Article One: Provider Groups Concerned by HHS, HUD Cuts in Trump’s \$4.8 Trillion Budget**

**Written By: Lois A. Bowers**

*Though President Trump’s proposed budget faces a long road in Congress before any part is final, senior living providers and advocates are speaking out against proposed, possibly harmful, cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, and HUD.*

The Department of Health and Human Services would see a 10% funding cut, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development would see a 15% funding cut, under the \$4.8 trillion budget proposed Monday by President Donald Trump.

The document covers fiscal year 2021, which begins in October. It is not expected to be passed by Congress in full; rather, it’s an opportunity for the president to convey his priorities. Nonetheless, organizations representing senior living operators told McKnight’s Senior Living that they are continuing to review the 138-page proposed budget and 202-page related “Major Savings and Reforms” document with an eye toward how the proposed cuts would affect operators and those they serve and a promise to advocate for their members.

“The president’s budget would result in significant cuts to federal healthcare spending, including Medicare and Medicaid. While the intent is to reduce waste, fraud and abuse,

it could ultimately limit resources available for long-term care at a time when demand is increasing,” Argentum President and CEO James Balda told McKnight’s Senior Living.

“Argentum supports proposals that will protect these programs and their beneficiaries, reduce the cost of care and prescription drugs, and help Americans better plan for their future care needs. As Congress and the administration negotiate these details, we will continue to advocate for policies that support these efforts.”

The American Health Care Association / National Center for Assisted Living and LeadingAge also are homed in on proposed Medicaid cuts contained in the budget.

“Proposals to fundamentally alter the vital safety net that the Medicaid program provides to many Americans can have an outsized impact on older adults who rely on Medicaid for their healthcare as well as to fund critical long-term services and supports,” LeadingAge said in a statement to McKnight’s Senior Living.

Mike Cheek, senior vice president of reimbursement policy at AHCA / NCAL, said the organization was still reviewing the proposal, “but we’re concerned about any changes to Medicaid that would threaten funding and access to long-term care.”

Approximately 16.5% of assisted living residents rely on Medicaid to pay for their daily services, according to NCAL. The proposed budget would cut \$700 billion from Medicaid over the next decade, although not all of those cuts would be directly to programs for older adults.

Trump’s FY21 budget requests \$94.5 billion for HHS, which is a 10% decrease from the level enacted for the 2020 budget, according to the administration.

Because fraud related to personal care services was responsible for 45% of convictions from Medicaid Fraud Control Unit efforts in 2018, the budget proposes to require states to implement claims edits to automatically deny unusual PCS payments such as duplicative services, services provided by unqualified providers, or services provided to those no longer eligible for Medicaid, as recommended by the HHS Office of Inspector General. The budget also proposes to extend states’ authority to investigate and prosecute abuse or neglect in home- and community-based settings.

As for HUD, the FY21 budget requests \$47.9 billion in gross discretionary funding for the agency, an \$8.6 billion, or 15.2%, decrease from the level enacted in the 2020 budget.

The proposed HUD budget includes \$180 million to construct approximately 1,200 new units of housing for the elderly and housing for persons with disabilities. “By providing rental assistance and supportive services in settings that prioritize universal design and accessibility, HUD can help residents delay or prevent the need for more institutional settings,” the document states.

The budget would eliminate the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnerships Programs, however, calling them “wasteful” and “recognizing a greater role for state and local governments and the private sector.”

“These eliminations would save taxpayers \$4.8 billion in 2021,” according to the administration.

LeadingAge described the HUD-related reductions as “significant.”

“About 1.6 million older adult households rely on the full scope of HUD’s rental assistance programs, which help about 4.6 million households. A 15% cut to HUD would undoubtedly harm older adults,” the organization said in a statement to McKnight’s Senior Living.

LeadingAge, however, said it was “heartened” by the request that Congress provide funding for new Section 202 homes, for full funding of existing service coordinators, and for an extension of HUD’s 40-site Integrated Wellness in Supportive Housing, or IWISH, demonstration.

The request for new homes, according to the organization, “will yield an expansion of the supply that will help to make progress in meeting the need for more affordable housing. What’s more, the value of the support for services, both service coordinators and an extension of the IWISH demonstration, cannot be overstated.”

LeadingAge, though, said it “strongly opposes” the budget proposal’s “deep cuts to other rental assistance programs as well as the proposal to raise rents and impose work requirements on HUD-assisted households, including older adults.” The organization said it will work with Congress “to parse the damaging proposals from the promising ones.”

[Click here](#) to read the article.



## **Article Two: Healthcare Leaders Optimistic about Value-based Payment Models, Concerned about Budget**

**Written By: Amy Novotney**

*A recent DataGen survey showed healthcare execs are leaning in to value-based payment models, though the bottom line is still the biggest deciding factor when it comes to adoption. A majority also said the new models have led to an improvement in quality.*

Almost two-thirds of healthcare leaders plan to enter into or expand their organization's value-based payment model participation in the next two years, according to market survey findings released Tuesday by the healthcare data analytics and policy firm DataGen. When asked which value-based care model they plan to enter or expand, commercial bundled payment arrangements and accountable care organizations tied as the top response, followed by bundled payments for care improvement advanced and capitation.

Although the value-based care movement has expanded in recent years, many organizations still face critical challenges when it comes to fully embracing these new models, particularly when it comes to making the necessary investment to effectively participate and ensuring adequate volume to protect against risk. Commissioned by DataGen and conducted by Sage Growth Partners, researchers surveyed 102 healthcare executives about their plans around value-based care and how they will navigate the challenges.

In addition to leaders' optimism about the future of value-based care, survey findings also show that a fourth of organizations' revenue is tied to value-based payments. Those organizations with 550 or more beds reported the largest portion of risk, with an average of 37.9% of revenue tied to such payments. Further, 69% of respondents say value-based payments have resulted in quality improving significantly or moderately, whereas 29% say it has only improved slightly or about the same. Only 45%, however, say financials have improved significantly or moderately, whereas 51% say they improved slightly or stayed about the same.

The biggest hurdle to a healthcare organization's investment into new payment models is the bottom line, respondents said. When asked about their strategic priorities for the year, almost three-fourths of healthcare leaders ranked focusing on efficiency and reducing costs among their top three priorities. Meanwhile, less than a third said they are prioritizing participation in value-based payment models, managing population health and improving patient safety.

Senior care leaders in particular should take note that healthcare executives are learning into alternative payment arrangements, DataGen Director of Informatics Alyssa Dahl said. As more organizations adopt programs that follow care longitudinally, skilled nursing facilities will need to evolve their models to adapt to — or risk being challenged by — the brave new world of value-based care, she added.

Dahl pointed to a bright spot from the survey findings for senior care leaders: The forecasted investment in care coordination.

“As organizations see increasing value in improving the healthcare experience for patients, senior care leaders may find allies within care coordination partners and the opportunity to forge deeper partnerships with hospitals and other providers across the care continuum,” she said.

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## **Article Three: Dr. Gustavo to Address Culture at HEALTHTAC East 2020**

**Written By: Cheryl Slavinsky**

*The exclusive gathering offers an opportunity for frank discussions on industry issues and collaborative problem-solving. Dr. Gustavo will bring a multi-dimensional perspective to how organizational culture impacts one of the industry's largest challenges: employee engagement and turnover.*

Gustavo Grodnitzky, Ph.D., author of the book, *Culture Trumps Everything: The Unexpected Truth about the Ways Environment Changes Biology, Psychology, and Behavior*, will deliver the keynote address next month at HEALTHTAC East 2020. The event will be held March 29-31 at Trump National Doral Miami.

Produced by Senior Living News, the invitation-only HEALTHTAC events bring together senior executives representing independent and assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing/rehabilitation across the U.S. and Canada. The unique forum limited to only 60 senior living executives at each event offers a rare opportunity for high-level relationship building and frank discussions on industry issues and problem solving.

“Some of the key issues faced by senior living organizations such as attracting the best employees and younger, more active residents—and especially engaging and retaining both—depend heavily on organizational culture,” said Rich Viola, CEO, HEALTHTAC and Senior Living News. “And whether we talk about a culture of caring or culture of engagement, it’s the culture of an organization or community that provides residents and team members with a sense of purpose and satisfaction. Culture is reflected in every aspect of operations, and it can affect happiness and productivity. It’s often what’s described when someone asks what kind of place it is to work or live.”

Dr. Grodnitzky, better known as Dr. Gustavo, will speak Monday, March 30, at the HEALTHTAC East 2020 opening breakfast and general session and also lead an afternoon group session.

President of Gustavo Grodnitzky, PLLC, an organizational consulting firm in the Denver, Colorado, area, Dr. Gustavo is a consultant, speaker, clinical psychologist, and author.

His diverse background brings a unique and multidimensional perspective to his keynotes focusing on employee engagement in the corporate environment.

Organizations are often burdened with mediocre or poorly performing employees—costing billions of dollars a year. This poor performance is often attributed to an employee’s individual qualities or attributes, such as personality, motivation and/or skill sets. However, within the field of psychology, we know that context is a better predictor and controller of behavior than individual attributes—and inside an organization, this “context” is what we also refer to as “corporate culture.” Culture trumps everything.

Since 2000, Dr. Gustavo has focused on engagement with corporate clients, working with Global 1000 companies around the world, as well as small, often family-run, businesses. As a professional speaker and consultant, he has delivered more than 1,000 presentations on a variety of topics, including corporate culture, emotional intelligence, building trust in organizations, and integrating multi-generational workforce.



His book, *Culture Trumps Everything: The Unexpected Truth about the Ways Environment Changes Biology, Psychology, and Behavior*, investigates the powerful ways in which a variety of factors, to include behavioral norms, alternative corporate models, habit patterns, connectedness, trust, language, and time perspective, impact the creation of “quintessence” in organizations.

It is this quintessence—or lack thereof—that ultimately determines the success and sustainability of organizations. As leaders, we get the organizations we deserve, as a direct result of the cultures we nourish (or neglect). If we want to ensure the best possible outcomes for ourselves and our organizations, we must focus on developing the cultures that foster success for all stakeholders, because ... culture trumps everything.

Dr. Gustavo has presented at a variety of national and international professional conferences and has worked extensively with a broad range of organizations, including Mercedes-Benz, Eli Lilly, N.A.S.A., Starbucks, BB&T, International Paper, and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

He holds a Ph.D. in Clinical and School Psychology from Hofstra University in New York. He is fluent in both English and Spanish, having been born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and raised in New York.

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## **Article Four: Bickford Senior Living Reveals Success with New Staffing Platform**

### **Uncredited Writer**

*New technology and a professional contact center are saving time, streamlining the application and hiring process and helping communities find top talent in a tight job market. The platform is now rolling out to more senior living operators.*

OLATHE, KS—Bickford Senior Living, a forward-thinking leader in Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care communities throughout the Midwest, is reporting notable success with a new technology to manage employment applicant inquiries.

SeniorVu's Applicant Manager Platform helps fill vacant employee positions faster with highly qualified applicants. SeniorVu's Job Applicant Managers handle all applications and schedule interviews on behalf of Bickford.

"Our team leaders face many daily demands," said Christy Dienstbier, Vice President of Human Resources at Bickford Senior Living. "When there is a vacancy, it is critical to reach applicants quickly for an interview. What used to take an average of five days for our teams to manage, SeniorVu's Applicant Manager Platform and Job Applicant Managers (contact center) handle for us in minutes solving a major problem for our branches and caregivers."

Dienstbier goes on to say, the added challenge of a tight job market in the healthcare sector creates a smaller hiring pool making it more important than ever to reach applicants quickly. Losing highly qualified applicants before Bickford ever had a chance to interview them was one of their biggest concerns.

In the 6-month pilot program between SeniorVu and Bickford Senior Living, 690 candidates came through the Applicant Manager Platform. SeniorVu's Job Applicant Managers contacted 99% of them and scheduled 652 interviews for Bickford. 63% of those interviews were completed and 77 new applicants were hired.

"That doesn't calculate the number of hours saved or the increased opportunity for Bickford to connect with the BEST applicants before they moved on to the competition," said Tim Donnelly, Founder and CEO of SeniorVu. "By taking this time-consuming task off the plates of Bickford management and caregivers in 60 communities means they were able to give more time and energy to their residents and that's what matters to us at SeniorVu."

With Bickford's successful results, SeniorVu is now adding other senior living operators to the Applicant Manager Platform.

Bickford Senior Living manages and operates 60 Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care branches throughout the country and has experience in constructing over 150 of these types of communities for various owners. The company was created when owners Don & Judie Eby were unable to find a quality assisted living residence for their mother, Mary Bickford, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.

SeniorVu is a Sales, Marketing and Employment Engagement Platform that gives communities control of their leads, brand, time and money. Their technology combined with a highly proficient contact center and support team means 100% of inquiries are reached within minutes. With real-time analytics, communities can determine where and when to spend their marketing dollars. After analyzing aggregated data from more than



# Industry Update



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600 communities in 18-months, SeniorVu delivers repeatable and predictable results to their senior living clients.

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