



## **July 2026 - All-Staff Post**

America's 250th birthday is July 4.

Do you have your flags and fireworks ready?

Angela Denker provided some historical context for why we should celebrate. She is an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) pastor at Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and provided resources to all the ELCA pastors in the U.S. for this July 4.

Pastor Angela wrote that this 250<sup>th</sup> birthday is a:

Celebratory moment for the endurance of a hopeful democracy, a country striving toward greater equality. The celebration is that we can resist a politics and religion of cruelty, shame, and fear, instead rooting ourselves in Jesus' gospel of sacrifice, humility, service, love, justice, and truth.

Enjoy this July 4 – America's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday!

## **Federal Government Update:**

The U.S. Congress passed the 21st Century Road to Housing Act, a landmark housing affordability bill with bipartisan support. The Act aims to increase housing supply, which is one of Immanuel's top advocacy goals. While the Act has been voted on and amended several times in both the Senate and the House, it finally passed its last congressional hurdle on June 23. The Act is now on the president's desk for his signature, should he choose to sign it and make it a new law.

Experts at LeadingAge have called this Act "a good first step" because it doesn't target senior housing specifically and doesn't invest new dollars in housing programs. It does authorize some new programs and reform rules for a variety of existing housing programs, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), rural housing administered by the Department of Agriculture, and many more. The bill also requires HUD to issue guidelines and best practices for improved state and local zoning to speed up housing production.

This summer and fall, Congress will focus on the annual appropriations process for all federal agencies. Immanuel watches the Medicaid and Housing and Urban Affairs budgets and will keep

you updated. In addition, most political pundits and those we connect with in DC believe that another “reconciliation-type” bill, like last summer’s HR1, will not get enough votes to pass before the November elections. HR1 made significant cuts to Medicaid last year.

## **Nebraska Legislature**

### **PACE® – Programs for All Inclusive Care**

This summer, we’re building an alliance of advocates and providers to urge the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (the Department) to increase Medicaid Income Eligibility only for Nebraska PACE® participants. We plan to bring another bill related to this for the 2027 legislative session.

### **Two Successes: Retroactive Medicaid Eligibility and Child Care Subsidies**

Thanks again to all of you who reached out to your State Senators in response to our Action Alert this spring on Retroactive Medicaid Eligibility. It worked! This bill became Nebraska law and mandates that the Department maintain the maximum retroactive coverage period allowable under federal law. The Department sought to reduce the retroactive period to 0 days, rather than the 60 days currently required by federal law for seniors.

Childcare is an important issue for our workforce. The legislature made the current income eligibility levels for childcare assistance permanent this spring, rather than allowing them to expire this year. With this law, the State chose long-term stability for our families, our kids, and our state's economy.

## **Iowa Legislature**

While we feared a huge property tax increase for senior living during this year’s legislative session, it was ultimately only modest, and we have successfully budgeted for it. Lawmakers with whom we worked could not remove the increase before the tax law passed, but they were successful in limiting it.

Iowa advocates were excited with the passage of a new law creating a state registry for Certified Medication Aides (not Certified Medical Assistants), the long-term care professionals who administer medications. The registry will establish a public, fee-free registry to verify an individual’s medication aide exam results and certification status. If a CMA is certified in another state, they can now transfer their credentials to Iowa by passing a challenge exam, eliminating the previous requirement to first work in the state or retake a nurse aide competency exam.

## **Intern Experience**

In January of this year, we welcomed Dominique Pace as an intern for her spring semester. She is at Creighton University working on her degree in Health Administration and Public Policy. She accompanied Advocacy staff on visits to the Nebraska and Iowa capitols, tracked Nebraska, Iowa, and Congressional legislative bills, and created an advocacy toolkit for Immanuel. Her internship ended May 22, and she has lined up her next internship in Lincoln with AARP over the summer!

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments.

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***Immanuel Advocacy Philosophy***

*We aim to highlight and advocate for seniors across Nebraska and Iowa, and when necessary, in the U.S. Congress. As a faith-based, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, we do not and cannot subscribe to the beliefs of one political party over another. When issues are critical to Immanuel, the people we serve, and our staff, we will advocate for what will benefit, not detriment.*

*Our goal with this monthly newsletter is to present the information objectively and unbiasedly. Some issues we focus on may fall further down one side of the traditional political spectrum than the other. In these times, many issues seem to become political that they never were before, such as access to food and housing.*

*Any call to action is completely voluntary and should not be viewed as an expectation relating to your role with Immanuel. All calls or efforts made should be done outside of your work hours, unless approved by your supervisor. As such, calls and efforts made outside of your working hours will not be compensated by Immanuel.*

*The Advocacy and Government Relations Coordinator is a member of the Legal and Compliance Team.*