



## Home Health and Hospice Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

July 8, 2022

**Coronavirus Update Calls for Week of July 11.** On **Monday, July 11, at 3:30pm ET**, we will welcome back aging services economist Howard Gleckman from the Urban Institute, who will talk about the issues laid bare by COVID-19 and provide insights on how we can create the aging services infrastructure of the future. On **Wednesday, July 13, at 3:30pm ET**, we will welcome Dr. Vito Ilacqua from the Indoor Environments Division of the Environmental Protection Agency to discuss how proper ventilation and HVAC systems can help mitigate COVID-19 transmission and create healthier and safer environments. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#). You can also find previous call recordings [here](#). Note that to access recordings of the calls you need a LeadingAge password. Any staff member of any LeadingAge member organization can set up a password to access previous calls and other "members only" content.

**CMS Release OASIS-E Data Submission Specification for EHR.** After numerous changes to the proposed OASIS-E item set, CMS has finally issued specifications for electronic health record vendors to update products for home health agencies. There are only six months until implementation of OASIS-E in January 2023 for developers to make modification to systems and allow home health agencies time to educate clinicians on the new systems. The new OASIS Data Submission Specifications were posted in the Downloads section of the Data Specifications [webpage](#). The OASIS-E Guidance manual [outlines](#) additional information, as well as the Item Change and Edit Change reports within the data specifications. Members should reach out to their EHR vendors in the coming months regarding updates to systems.

**CMS Releases Hospice Care Index Technical Report.** The Hospice Care Index (HCI) Technical Report was [released](#) July 1, 2022. This report provides descriptive analyses and detailed contextual information about the new HCI quality measure. The national average HCI score is 8.8, with 37.9 percent of hospices receiving a score of 10. HCI scores were higher on average among larger hospices, older hospices, non-profit hospices, and facility-based hospices.

**Quarterly Home Health CAHPS Newsletter Released.** The HHCAHPS Team has [posted](#) the next issue of the HHCAHPS Coordination Team Quarterly Review (CTQR) to provide information about HHCAHPS to home health agencies and survey vendors. In this addition of the newsletter, the team walks providers and vendors through how to review historical trends in CAHPS through archived reports. The team also includes reminders on the next data submission period of July 21, 2022 and how to submit Discrepancy Notification Reports (DNRs).

**Congressional Update.** Senate Democrats released [legislative text](#) detailing their [updated drug pricing plan](#) in order to revive the reconciliation bill that fell apart last year. The proposal is being sent to the parliamentarian to ensure it follows the Senate's rules on reconciliation, and largely mirrors the agreement forged on drug pricing in November. However, some changes have been made to the proposal. Medicare drug negotiations begin in 2023, rather than 2024, and negotiated prices take effect in 2026 instead of 2025. The new bill also allows for a delay in negotiations for biosimilar drugs "for up

to two years, if a biosimilar demonstrates a high likelihood of entering the market before the negotiated price would take effect."

Further, while the new text maintains the provisions that cap seniors' drug costs under Medicare at \$2,000 each year, it broadens the Part D low-income subsidy eligibility from 135% to 150% of the federal poverty level, and it modifies the premium stabilization portion of the bill. The bill also no longer includes a \$35 monthly cap on insulin costs for Medicare patients. Instead, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has signaled that he wants to bring a more comprehensive, bipartisan insulin bill from Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Susan Collins (R-ME) to the floor for a vote.

Senator Schumer's decision to continue negotiating with Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) to craft a reconciliation package has thrown a possible wrench into bipartisan, bicameral negotiations on the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA), legislation to boost domestic semiconductor manufacturing and U.S. competitiveness. In fact, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell vowed to stop USICA in its tracks if Schumer pushes a partisan reconciliation package. So, what does the path forward look like from here? Will USICA take a back seat to the reconciliation package? Will both bills make it to the finish line independently? Or, will a scaled back version of USICA be incorporated into the reconciliation bill to create a larger "economic" package. Regardless of the outcome, July will be an interesting month in Congress so stay tuned for additional updates!

**CMS unveiled a suite of new resources to improve CMS and state oversight of Medicaid managed care programs**, including updates to a new web-based portal for state reporting on managed care programs to CMS, additional reporting templates and a new technical assistance toolkit, to help states improve their overall monitoring and oversight of managed care. As an additional step to aid states and the individuals many Medicaid programs serve, CMS also released a toolkit to support program monitoring for Medicaid enrollees in Managed Long-Term Services and Supports (MLTSS). The toolkit, "Promoting Access in Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care: Managed Long-Term Services and Supports Access Monitoring Toolkit," was developed in response to MLTSS growth and federal oversight concerns about access to services and quality-of-care. View the Medicaid and CHIP Managed Care Monitoring and Oversight Tools [here](#).

**Another LeadingAge Workforce Win. House Appropriators Urge HRSA to Address Older Adults Workforce Shortages** The House Appropriations Committee passed the fiscal year (FY) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill on June 30, 2022. The bill includes several wins for LeadingAge, that would help to increase the nation's aging services workforce. The bill allocates funding for several federal programs that are of interest to LeadingAge and are highlighted in an article [here](#). Among other things, the bill includes: nearly \$2 billion in new money for the Department of Labor, including for apprenticeship programs, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity state grants, and Senior Community Service Employment; \$15,6 billion in new money for HHS to enhance nursing workforce development and other health care programs; and enhanced funding for targeted programs of the Administration on Community Living. The Committee also adopted [a manager's amendment from House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro](#) (D-CT), that added language to the committee report that urges the Health Resources and Services Administration

(HRSA) to “address the skilled care workforce needs of seniors through existing workforce education and training programs.”

According to the committee report, “the Committee supports HRSA’s efforts to develop the workforce needed to care for a rapidly aging U.S. population. The Committee report encourages HRSA to address the skilled care workforce needs of seniors through existing workforce education and training programs.” This language was added as a new paragraph after the “Grant-Based Program to Include Disability Clinical Care Competency Training Program,” that would be developed in collaboration with the National Council on Disability, community-based organizations, health professions schools and minority health and public health and disability groups, and several other entities. Additionally, the committee report requires a HRSA report and analysis of technology’s role in the public health care workforce. The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the Labor-HHS appropriations bill after the

**Diverse Elders has launched a new [website](#)** featuring updated information on their trainings, including the Caring for Those Who Care curriculum, which is a resource for aging professionals to learn about the unique needs of diverse family caregivers. The training curriculum will equip professionals with insights into the lived experiences of the following populations: African American and Black Caregivers, American Indian and Alaska Native Caregivers, Chinese American and Korean American Caregivers, Hispanic and Latino Caregivers, LGBTQ+ Caregivers, and Southeast Asian American Caregivers.

**Telehealth during the pandemic:** Fair Health recently released an issue brief looking at “[The Evolution of Telehealth during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)” utilizing data from their [Monthly Telehealth Regional Tracker](#). Many changes in telehealth utilization were likely related to the course of the pandemic. For 6 of the 12 months of 2021, telehealth utilization fell from the level of utilization in the prior month. Nevertheless, it remained much higher than before the pandemic. For example, in spring and summer 2021, telehealth claim lines dropped as vaccination levels increased. In fall and winter 2021, however, telehealth utilization rose again as the Delta and Omicron variants led to increased COVID-19 cases. The brief also notes that mental health conditions have been the most common telehealth diagnosis nationally throughout the pandemic.

**COVID was the third leading cause of death in the US in both 2020 and 2021.** A study conducted by researchers at the National Cancer Institute and published today in [JAMA Internal Medicine](#) found that COVID accounted for 1 in every 8 deaths between March 2020 and October 2021. Interestingly, in 2020, COVID was the second leading cause of death in 2020, but fell to third in 2021; the researchers opined that targeted vaccinations in this age group caused the change. The researchers also found that the pandemic indirectly caused increased deaths during the study period from other causes such as heart disease, accidents, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease and diabetes, possibly because people were reluctant or unable to seek medical care. The NCI researchers also suggest that cancer deaths may increase in the future as a result of individuals skipping preventive screenings during the pandemic.

**Now Available: June Webinar Recordings.** Access is now available to both June webinar recordings. [Navigating the Employee Retention Credit \(ERC\)](#) helps aging services providers understand the nuances of the ERC, the claims process, and eligibility requirements. The [Active Shooter Preparedness webinar](#) provides organizations with critical decision-making techniques and safety

protocols that can save lives. [View all LeadingAge webinars](#) on topics ranging from Cybersecurity to Survey Readiness.

**Annual Meeting Registration: Update Your My.LeadinAge Username/Password.** 2022 LeadingAge Annual Meeting + EXPO registration will open next week! To register, you'll need your My.LeadinAge login information. [Reset or recover your password here](#). We're excited to see you in Denver on October 16-19!

**The Tools You Need to Tell the Positive Story of Aging Services.** Opening Doors to Aging Services is a national-local initiative to introduce the aging services sector to Americans—and to shift perceptions positively. Watch this [short overview video](#) and explore the research, communications strategies, and other assets on [OpeningDoors.org](#). Also check out these [QuickCasts and workshops](#) to help tell an authentic story of aging services and move perceptions positively with Opening Doors!

**PRF Reporting Period 3 Begins TODAY:** HRSA has opened the reporting portal so providers can begin reporting on funds received in the first half of 2021, as part of Reporting Period 3. Providers have until 11:59 p.m. ET to complete this reporting and be considered in compliance. Here is the latest [article](#) with more information and tips for providers on RP3.

**Providers Who Returned PRF Get Second Chance to Report:** As we noted earlier this week, HRSA notified eligible providers that they have a one-time opportunity to complete their reporting period 1 reports and have their PRF for this timeframe reissued. There are more details on this process in this [article](#) posted today.

**OSHA Extends National Emphasis Program.** The Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced yesterday that it is extending its “Revised National Emphasis Program for COVID-19” until further notice. The program, launched in March 2021, focuses enforcement efforts on companies that “put the largest number of workers at serious risk of contracting the coronavirus, and on employers who engage against workers who complain about unsafe or unhealthful conditions or exercise other rights under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.” As has been the case from the start of this program, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living communities and home health agencies are among the industries considered to have higher potential for coronavirus exposures. OSHA is also temporarily increasing the coronavirus inspection goal from 5% of inspections to 10%. More details in this [OSHA press release](#) and in the text of the [Revised National Emphasis Program for COVID-19](#) (click on the PDF in this link).

**LeadingAge Participates in SHRM’s “Generation Cares” Workforce Solution Coalition Planning Session.** The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) invited LeadingAge and other stakeholder organizations to join a soon-to-be-announced coalition – Generation Cares – to build solutions to our country’s child and dependent care crisis. An initial planning meeting was held on June 30, 2022. The coalition will bring together advocates, providers and the employer community in order to advance policies to strengthen the availability and quality of child and dependent care across the United States. The coalition will engage with the public, federal agencies, Congress, and the White House on targeted measures to generate support for workforce solutions, and kick-off in late summer.

**Lessons Learned on Measuring Success for Inclusive Transportation Planning.** On *Thursday, July 14, 2022 from 2:00 to 3:00 PM ET* Shawn Brennan, Montgomery (MD) County Aging & Disability Services and Jackie Connor will lead a roundtable that will focus on determining the success of inclusive planning processes, including defining success, what measures should be used, how to determine the level of inclusiveness of planning efforts, and methods for measurement. [Click here](#) to register.

**White House Briefing on Long COVID Actions.** The White House Office of Public Engagement is holding a virtual briefing – closed to press but open to all interested stakeholders – on long COVID. Administration leaders will discuss the reports available on long COVID, including highlighting who is at highest risk and directly affected. They will outline workgroups and identify the team working on these concerns. The administration representatives will also take questions, particularly focusing on those submitted in advance. [Here](#) is a link to more information and a registration form.