



Home Health and Hospice Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

July 22, 2022

LeadingAge COVID Update Calls. How are older people doing at this point in the pandemic? How can providers support their best quality of life? On Monday, July 25 at 3:30 PM ET, we are going to look into the trends and impact of COVID-19 on the cognitive, physical and psycho-social health and well-being of older adults. Dr. Catherine O'Brien from the Mather Institute is going to unpack the results of the Age Well study and show how we can help to improve the quality of life for older adults in aging service settings. 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

A Day of Action on the Aging Services Workforce. Get Ready for the July 27 Aging Services Workforce Day of Action! On Wednesday, July 27, join fellow LeadingAge members around the country for a virtual Aging Services Workforce Day of Action, part of the Aging Services Workforce Now campaign, to demand Congress take immediate action to address the workforce crisis in aging services.

Get ready for July 27th when we will ask LeadingAge members to:

- Contact your members of Congress and tell them to take action on legislation that will strengthen the workforce and support the aging services infrastructure.
- Share your workforce story with your members of Congress: what staffing challenges do you have and how are they impacting your ability to meet the needs of older Americans.
- Urge others, including residents and staff, to add join us on the July 27 Aging Services Day of Action.

Learn more about LeadingAge's [Aging Services Workforce Now](#) campaign.!

Home Health Care Compare July Refresh. Home health care compare has been [updated](#) for the July refresh. The Home Health Care CAHPS (HHCAHPS) Survey results based on responses from patients who received home health care from Medicare-certified home health agencies (HHAs) [from January 2021 through December 2021](#). Data are also available on the HHCAHPS [website](#) through the "Archived Publicly Reported Data" link under the "General Information" tab. On this webpage, you can access

- HHA-level data,
- state and national averages,
- star ratings cut points, and
- patient mix adjustment coefficients for the linearized data used to construct the star ratings.

21st Century CURES Act does NOT apply to long-term care and post-acute care providers. Some LeadingAge members have asked whether the 21st Century CURES Act requirement that health care providers make electronic health records accessible to residents/responsible parties applies to long-term care and post-acute care providers. **IT DOES NOT.** Majd Alwan reports that some vendors are encouraging LTPAC providers to prepare, but it is NOT currently required. Majd shared this [FAQ](#) and link to a LeadingAge Hub [webinar](#) in which he talks with representatives of CMS and the HHS Office of the

National Coordinator for Health IT. Both the FAQ and the HHS representatives explain that CURES does not apply to LTPAC providers.

Corrections to Processing of Canceled Home Health Notices of Admission and of Period Sequence Edits.

On July 21, CMS issued Change Request (CR) [12790](#) to correct two problems in Notice of Admission (NOA) processing. Both changes attempt to correct additional NOA burdens for providers. The CR will be effective for claims processed on or after January 1, 2023.

- Previous CR 12227 contained requirements for removing a home health admission period created by an NOA using TOB 032D if the NOA was submitted in error. This CR did not take into account reversing changes to the previous admission period resulting when an NOA is received in a transfer situation from one home health agency to another. Currently, if a transfer NOA is submitted in error and subsequently canceled with a TOB 032D it will remove the transfer agency's admission period but will not restore the original calculated 30-day End date on the period of the previous agency's episode. The new CR revise Medicare systems to restore the previous period's End date when a transfer NOA is canceled, which will avoid administrative burdens for home health agencies.
- The new CR also updates Medicare systems to prevent claims which have been medically reviewed and later identified for adjustment due to an incorrect period sequence from either erasing additional medical review coding if medical review has been completed OR prevents additional unnecessary additional record requests to providers if they are still under medical review.

New Resources for Home Health Prospective Payment Rule. To help members navigate the CMS Home Health Prospective Payment System Rate Update, [LeadingAge is taking action](#). If implemented, these cuts to home health providers would further erode access to care and services needed by older adults and their families. [Check out these helpful talking points](#), a [sample op-ed template](#), and [slides from our recent Home Health Member Network meeting](#)

Updated Quarterly OASIS Q&As. CMS [released](#) July 2022 OASIS Q&A's. This document is updated on a quarterly basis and is intended to provide guidance on OASIS questions that were received by CMS help desks. As a reminder, responses may be time-limited and may be superseded by future CMS guidance. This quarterly guidance includes clarifications on the following items:

- D0150/D0160 – Patient Mood Interview (PHQ-2 to 9) and Total Severity Score: If agencies miss providing this assessment or questions within the assesment, CMS outlines in these Q&As how to properly code the missed or unasked questions for these items. Additionally, CMS states this guidance should supersedes what is in the current draft OASIS-E Guidance Manual posted in May 2022.
- D0150 – Patient Mood Interview (PHQ-2 to 9): CMS provides guidance on determining when to conduct the PHQ-2 (D0150A and D0150B) versus the full PHQ-9 (D0150A-D0150I).
- GG0130/GG0170 – Self Care and Mobility: Providers asked for examples how to assess “not based on availability of such assistance” when coding self-care and mobility.
- GG0170 – Mobility: Providers asked for clarification with waking and wheelchair activities what CMS means by “the 90-degree turn should occur *at the patient's ability level*”.

- GG0170M, N & O – Mobility: When coding for uses of stair lift, CMS answers questions on what is being assessed, either type and amount of assistance required to get off the stair lift or type and amount to use the stair lift itself.
- M2020/M2030 – Management of Oral Medication and Management of Injectable Medication: CMS provides clarification for on coding for where medications are “routinely stored” in situations where an individual resides in Assisted Living Facility that may have policies on medication storage.
- N0415 – High Risk Drug Classes: Use and Indication: CMS clarifies how to document if there is a patient-specific indication noted for all medications in the drug class.

Meeting with VA on Home Health and Adult Day Services. LeadingAge had a discussion with the VA’s Central Office Division of Purchased Long Term Services and Supports to discuss expanding collaboration between our members and VA, including the impact of the newly passed Elizabeth Dole Act on respite services for veterans and their families, restructuring of reauthorizations processes for home health and home care, and incentives for veterans to utilize adult day. We look forward to continuing the conversation, as VA noted their interest in ongoing sessions to talk about enhancing our partnership in order to serve more vets aging in the community.

CMS releases the Beneficiary Protections and Medicaid Drug Coverage, Particularly Under Value Based Purchasing (VBP) Arrangements CMCS Informational Bulletin. This bulletin reminds states and stakeholders of the existing federal beneficiary protections in statute and regulation that must be followed when providing Medicaid pharmacy benefits, especially when states agree to enter into novel payment arrangements with drug manufacturers such as value-based purchasing arrangements. Learn more [here](#).

The Economic Costs of Caregiving: The July 20th *Generations* [article](#) asserts that there must be increased access to home- and community-based supports for all who need care and care workers must be paid a thriving wage, [which would help to address the worker shortage in the field](#). The author also states that when the country ensures caregivers receive the support they deserve, generational poverty will be disrupted by allowing all women, particularly women of color, “to participate in the workforce, stabilizing their families, their communities and, by extension, this nation.”

Congressional Virtual Briefing: Addressing the Workforce Crisis in Aging Services. To coincide with the new coordinated advocacy campaign, “Aging Services Workforce Now,” LeadingAge held a Congressional Briefing on July 20, 2022, for Senate and House congressional staff. The briefing was an opportunity to highlight the policy opportunities that would meet the needs of older Americans in the face of persistent and severe workforce shortage for aging services providers.

Katie Smith Sloan served as moderator for the briefing. A few LeadingAge providers were also invited to address their workforce challenges, and House and Senate leaders who focus on addressing workforce challenges across the long-term care continuum. Representative Ann Kuster (D-NH), Co-Chair, of the newly formed bipartisan House 21st Century Long-Term Care Caucus, attended the briefing and shared opening remarks. The Congresswoman also reiterated the caucus’ commitment to proactively studying

ways to create a better system for older Americans, including the issues that would strengthen the existing workforce challenges facing the long-term care sector.

The LeadingAge panelist included: Mike King, LeadingAge Board Chair and President & CEO of Volunteers of America, Alexandria, VA; Tom Syverson, Director of Government Relations, The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society / Sanford Health, Sioux Falls, SD; Jeff Farber, President & CEO, The New Jewish Home, New York, NY; and, Rob Lahammer, Vice President of Engagement and Advocacy, Presbyterian Homes and Services, Roseville, MN.

Katie also highlighted the top findings in the LeadingAge Workforce snap poll, conducted in June 2022, where respondents reported that their workforce difficulties remain; the pipeline for potential workers has not gotten stronger as people leave the field; and nursing positions are especially difficult to fill. Additionally, LeadingAge provided an overview of the campaign's "[full policy asks](#)" that we are asking Congress and the Administration to take immediate action, which includes:

- Pay aging professionals a living wage.
- Offer incentives to retain and attract qualified staff.
- Expand training and advancement opportunities.
- Build dependable international pipelines of trained caregivers.
- Enact meaningful, equitable long-term care financing.

Older Adult Homelessness Will Increase Significantly Without Action. On July 19, the Senate Banking Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development held a hearing, "Opportunities and Challenges in Addressing Homelessness." Almost 600,000 people experience homelessness on any given night in the United States, Subcommittee Chair Tina Smith (D-MN) said in her opening statement. The biggest factor in rise of homelessness is the severe shortage of affordable housing and the lack of housing supply, Chair Smith said. "The answer is to provide shelter, to provide housing first, to help people get stable and healthy." Chair Smith said homelessness disproportionately impacts Black, Latino, and native communities. Expanding the supply of affordable senior housing is LeadingAge's top housing priority. "Over the next decade or so ... demographic shifts will result in the older adult homeless population increasing significantly: nearly tripling by 2030. People of color are and will continue to be overrepresented in this population," Ann Oliva, the chief executive office of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, said the hearing. Read more about [the hearing here](#).

MedPAC Releases July Data Book. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission [released](#) a data book looking at national health care and Medicare spending along with beneficiary demographics and other critical post-acute care spending topics. Section 8 [looks](#) specifically at post-acute care spending in skilled nursing and home health. The report noted a decrease in post-acute care providers between 2020 and 2021 with home health agencies declining by .8% and skilled nursing declining .5%.

White House Summit on Vaccines. The White House announced plans for a Summit on the Future of COVID-19 Vaccines via livestream on Tuesday, July 26 from 11:00 AM – 3:15 PM ET. The program will outline a path towards innovative, next generation COVID-19 vaccines and feature leaders who are on the cutting edge of these discoveries. Interested individuals can [RSVP here](#). The event agenda will be shared closer to the date of the event. Many LeadingAge members have asked about the non-mRNA

vaccines and about vaccines that might be more effective in fighting Omicron and its variants. It is possible that these questions will be addressed at this summit.

Long COVID affects nearly 1 in 4 cases, with symptoms that may last for months. A new USC study finds that 23% of people infected with COVID will become “long haulers,” and identifies predictors of who is likely to develop the sometimes-debilitating symptoms that can last for months. The research, which appears in [Scientific Reports](#), is unique because it accounts for preexisting symptoms such as fatigue and sneezing that are common to other **New Resources for Home Health Prospective Payment Rule**. To help members navigate the CMS Home Health Prospective Payment System Rate Update, [LeadingAge is taking action](#). If implemented, these cuts to home health providers would further erode access to care and services needed by older adults and their families. [Check out these helpful talking points](#), a [sample op-ed template](#), and [slides from our recent Home Health Member Network meeting](#) conditions and may be mistaken for COVID symptoms. An interdisciplinary study from the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology also reveals predictors of [who might get long COVID](#). [Note: CDC has previously reported that long COVID affects 1 in 5 cases.]

LeadingAge Plans Meeting with CMS Administrator and Medicare Director to Discuss Deep Concerns with Medicare Advantage. Katie Smith Sloan sent a [letter](#) to CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure and CMS Director of Medicare Meena Seshamani on Monday, July 18th outlining concerns we have related to the future of Medicare and Medicare Advantage and asking to meet to discuss how we might work together to ensure beneficiary access to services through the two programs as well as financial sustainability for providers. Dr. Seshamani quickly responded to the request and a meeting is being scheduled.

COVID-19 boosters offer good protection against early Omicron subvariants: First and second COVID-19 vaccine booster doses conferred substantial protection against emergency department/urgent care (ED/UC) visits and hospitalizations caused by infections with the Omicron subvariants BA.1, BA.2, and BA.2.12.1, finds a CDC [study](#) of adults in 10 US states published late last week in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. Analysis of the study by CIDRAP is found [here](#).

Roadmap for Investment in Dementia Care: In the next eight years, the number of people living with dementia worldwide could reach 78 million, according to the World Health Organization. On average, people with dementia live five to 10 years after diagnosis and they will need medical, neuropsychological, and social services throughout their care journey. In much of the world, people living with dementia and their caregivers do not receive high-quality, coordinated, comprehensive care. The Milken Institute and Alzheimer’s Society have released a [roadmap](#) to address this urgent need.

Boost Now or Wait? As this KHN [article](#) explains, the rapidly mutating virus has created a conundrum for the public and a communications challenge for health officials. Dr. Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said he doesn’t expect to see the public’s level of interest in the vaccine change much even as new boosters are released and eligibility expands. In his view, parts of the country with high vaccine coverage will remain relatively insulated from new variants that emerge, while regions with low vaccine acceptance could be set for a “rude awakening.”

HHS Renews Public Health Emergency. On the afternoon of July 15 HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra once again renewed the Public Health Emergency (PHE). Renewing the public health emergency declaration ensures health care providers and state and territorial health departments have continued flexibility to respond to the pandemic, helping save lives. These flexibilities support efforts such as rapid patient care during emergencies, including waivers from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for certain requirements under [section 1135](#) of the Social Security Act. Examples of such requirements include preapproval requirements and [temporary reassignment](#) of state, territorial, tribal or local staff who typically are funded by federal grants in order to respond to the emergency. One of the first statements from the Biden Administration was that HHS would give at least 60 days' notice prior to terminating the PHE.

One Week Left for Home Health CAPHS Q1 CY2022 Data Submission. The next data [submission deadline](#) for Q1 CY2022 Home Health CAPHS data is Thursday, July 21, 2022. If your agency/vendor has not yet submitted CY2022, Q1 data for all or most of your home health patients the CAPHS team is encouraging you to submit as soon as possible. To ensure that files can be accepted by the **deadline at 11:59 PM Eastern Time on July 21, 2022**, you must submit all Quarter 1 files on or before Wednesday, July 20, 2022. Since CMS will not accept any files after the data submission deadline, make sure you check your data submission reports to verify that all of your submitted files were accepted. And, correct and re-submit all files before the data submission deadline.

New Commonwealth Fund Report Looks at Improving Medicare Home Health Benefit Using Lessons Learned from Medicaid. A [report](#) from the Commonwealth fund looks at issues surrounding accessibility which hindered the Medicare home health benefit's ability to be effective. The report used structured interviews with 17 state officials, aging and disability experts, case managers, health care service providers, and advocates to assess the successes and challenges in the delivery of personal care services in Medicaid. In the accompanying Health Affairs [article](#), report authors highlighted the need for family caregiver supports, more education and outreach to beneficiaries, and actions policy makers can take to improve the Medicare home health benefit. Earlier this year, Commonwealth Fund [supported](#) researchers from the Bipartisan Policy Center to explore improvements to the Medicare home health benefit CMS could implement now with their existing authorities.