



Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

January 22, 2021

Monday, January 25 LeadingAge Coronavirus Update call -- More vaccine clinic tips for affordable housing providers and more updates and analysis of new Biden administration actions. On Monday at 3:30 PM eastern time, join us to hear from Jennifer Truppa, Director of Social Services and Quality Assurance at Embrace Living Communities. Embrace has had 10 clinics at affordable senior communities and has 15+ more scheduled. Hear from Jennifer on how they are managing these vaccine clinics in affordable senior housing settings and learn some ideas for how to handle these clinics in different states and different settings.

White House COVID-19 Strategy. Today, the White House issued its [National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness](#). The Strategy lays out seven goals: 1) Restore trust with the American people, 2) Mount a safe, effective, and comprehensive vaccination campaign, 3) Mitigate spread through expanding masking, testing, data, treatments, health care workforce, and clear public health standards, 4) Immediately expand emergency relief and exercise the Defense Production Act, 5) Safely reopen schools, businesses, and travel while protecting workers, 6) Protect those most at risk and advance equity, including across racial, ethnic and rural/ urban lines, and 7) Restore U.S. leadership globally and build better preparedness for future threats.

NHSN COVID-19 Vaccine Reporting Module. You may recall several weeks ago when CDC rolled out the [COVID-19 vaccine reporting module in NHSN](#). We participated in a call with CDC Thursday to provide insight on how to improve reporting. Remember 2 important things about this reporting: 1) this is not required reporting. Reporting this information through this module is optional. 2) reporting information through this vaccine module does not take the place of any other reporting, including required [vaccine administration reporting](#) (if you are using the LTC Pharmacy Partnership Program, your pharmacy partner is doing this reporting).

The NHSN COVID-19 vaccine reporting module gathers aggregate data on vaccine administration and will be used in the national strategy to increase vaccine distribution and administration. The data can also be used by states and individual providers to track and target vaccine administration, identify where support is needed and where things are going well. CDC has created tracking worksheets to assist in gathering and entering data and is working on CSV file upload capability. We agree that data is important, but also recognize that any reporting is challenging when providers are already being asked to report so much (and under such strain). We have encouraged CDC to also partner with states to identify any possible ways to gather data from the states, as well as opportunities for states to upload this data on behalf of providers like some states do with other NHSN reporting. Tracking worksheets, printable data forms, tables of instructions, and trainings slides are available [here](#).

CDC guidance on antigen testing in nursing homes. On January 7, CDC updated [guidance on antigen testing in nursing homes](#). There's been some recent chatter about this guidance, but not much has changed. An [MMWR released this week](#) by CDC (specific to Abbott BinaxNOW test cards) examines the issues of specificity and sensitivity, which we have been aware of: antigen tests are not as sensitive as molecular tests (PCR), particularly in asymptomatic individuals. However, the speed and ease of identification afforded by point of care antigen tests recommends them to the long-term care community. The serial testing practices under which these tests are often used also helps make them an effective option. FDA and CDC continue to recommend use of these tests in long-term care settings. The updates to the January 7 guidance are consistent with prior recommendations: if the antigen test result looks wrong, re-test with a molecular (PCR) test. If a symptomatic individual has a negative antigen test result, retest. If an asymptomatic individual has a positive antigen test result, retest. This [tool from CDC](#) helps spell it all out. Also remember that in either case, these individuals would remain under transmission-based precautions / work restrictions until the result of the molecular test was returned.

PPP Loans Reopened Tuesday, and Some News: The PPP loans reopened fully on Tuesday to all lenders, both for initial and second draw loans. SBA issued a new FAQ document for borrowers on how to calculate loan amounts and determining gross receipts. We are reviewing and will publish on it this week. *Article on second draw:* <https://leadingage.org/regulation/paycheck-protection-program-second-draw-loan-information-aging-services>; *SBA FAQ:* <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Second-Draw-PPP-Loans--How-Calculate-Revenue-Reduction-Maximum-Loan-Amounts-Including-Documentation-Provide1192021.pdf>

Let's get vaccines in arms. Across the country many people, including some aging services provider staff members, are reluctant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Today we posted a [succinct article](#) with the basics of why some people are reluctant and strategies providers are using to encourage people. Perhaps most valuable are the many embedded links that point to information and resources to support the vaccine strategies.

Some Providers Being Denied Provider Relief Funds: Some members who applied for Phase 3 funding are being denied PRF payments. Nicole has written an [article](#) that outlines how these determinations were made and the factors that may have contributed to the outcome. HHS told us when it announced the first round of payments for Phase 3 were going out in early December that roughly half of the Phase 3 applicants wouldn't be receiving a payment because their payments to date covered their losses for the first half of 2020. Nicole's article fills in the blanks on these issues as well as the status of those awaiting Phase 2 payments and other issues. We will advocate to the new Administration that they should prioritize opening another application process quickly to help address providers struggling with losses from the third and fourth quarters of 2020.

AARP lawsuit against HHS/CMS. Two days before the current Administration ended, consumer groups [sued](#) Secretary Azar of HHS alleging that the Trump Administration violated federal law when it changed the way CMS issued fines. In 2017, CMS issued a "sub-guidance" advising that states could only impose fines on nursing homes per instance rather than per day of noncompliance. The suit claims that the Administration should have gone through rule-making or in the alternative, that the sub-guidance was arbitrary and capricious. Since Secretary Azar is gone it will now be the Biden Administration that responds. We should note that according to the law suit Secretary-designate Becerra wrote a letter to HHS objecting to the sub-guidance when it was issued, but we don't know how the incoming administration will respond to a claim that would limit their authority to make changes without going through the regulatory process.

Automating and Streamlining Vaccination Pre-registration and Consent Forms. Please share [this article](#) from LeadingAge CAST with members. It shows them/ their IT staff how to automate vaccination pre-registration and pre-filling consent form. The step by step method described can be used by any provider type, regardless of the type or sophistication of their information system, as long as these systems have the ability to export data in Excel sheet format.

DEI Survey for MSOs and Life Plan Communities. LeadingAge's newly adopted strategic plan places the issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) front and center for 2021. Over the next 3 years, LeadingAge will offer members a host of practical tools and resources they can use to develop a more diverse and inclusive workforce. LeadingAge will launch the DEI initiative with a brief survey sent today to chief executive officers at approximately 900 LeadingAge multisite organizations and life plan communities. The DEI survey is designed to help LeadingAge identify steps members have taken to make their organizations more diverse and inclusive, understand the role of the person who oversees the DEI initiative, and learn the challenges organizations are encountering as they work to reach their diversity goals. The DEI survey takes only 5 minutes to complete. Surveys will be sent via email and participants will have approximately 2-3 weeks to complete the surveys online.

Emergence of SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7 Lineage: CDC released a [MMWR on the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 1.1.7 mutation lineage](#). Modeling data indicate that B.1.1.7 has the potential to increase the U.S. pandemic trajectory in the coming months. CDC's system for genomic surveillance and the effort to expand sequencing will increase the availability of timely U.S. genomic surveillance data. The increased transmissibility of the B.1.1.7 variant warrants universal and increased compliance with mitigation strategies, including distancing and masking. Higher vaccination coverage might need to be achieved to protect the public. Genomic sequence analysis through the National SARS-CoV-2 Strain Surveillance program will enable a targeted approach to identifying variants of concern in the United States.

Vaccination Tips and Tools. LeadingAge is helping members with education staff and older adults about the COVID-19 vaccines. We're sharing important educational resources and hosting special LeadingAge webinars with pharmacy partners CVS and Walgreens. We'll also connect members with experts on vaccine education on weekly member online events. Check out our [Vaccination Tips and Tools](#).

Don't Miss the National LeadingAge 2021 Policy Action Forum. Looking for an insider's view of what all the change in Washington DC means for aging services? [Register now](#) for LeadingAge's 2021 Policy Action Forum on January 27 at 2 p.m. ET. Special guest and health policy expert Dr. Adaeze Enekwechi will share her perspective on what the transitions of power happening in Washington this month mean for our field. And LeadingAge's national leadership will talk about the path for advocacy and policy in the year ahead. This is a members-only opportunity to ask questions of Dr. Enekwechi, national Board Chair Carol Silver Elliott, President and CEO Katie Smith Slone and SVP of Policy Ruth Katz. [Register now to join the members-only event.](#)

Annual Meeting 2021 Call for Sessions: Deadline Approaching. Do you have an idea for a session that should be part of next year's Annual Meeting? Submit your ideas for consideration through our [online call for sessions form](#) by January 25, 2021. [Learn more](#) and [submit your proposal](#) today.

New Mentor's Voice Episode. LeadingAge's newest podcast, The Mentor's Voice, provides students and young professionals an opportunity to candidly learn from leaders in the field of aging. This week's mentor is Erica Thrash-Sall, executive director of McFarlan Charitable Corporation. [Listen to how Erica has grown as a leader](#) and her wavy path into the field of aging. The Mentor's Voice is brought to you by LeadingAge and supported by Markentum.