



Home Health and Hospice Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

February 4, 2022

LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Call, Monday, February 7, 3:30 PM ET. In the quest for the most reliable data and trends to track the pandemic, Dr. Ali Mokdad and his team at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation has been proven right time and again. He will return to the LeadingAge Update Call on Monday to talk about where we are and what's next. His recent public remarks are pointing to an optimistic trend. Join us Monday to hear the details. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#).

CDC Updates Recommendations for Duration of Isolation and Precautions: CDC has released updated recommendations for the duration of isolation and precautions in individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection. As before, symptomatic individuals who are not immunocompromised, regardless of vaccination status, continue isolation and precautions for 10-20 days after exposure depending on the severity of illness. For individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised, CDC now recommends a test-based strategy to determine the duration of isolation and precautions. Read more [here](#).

Are we heading toward endemicity? Dr. Monica Gandhi thinks it is looking good for the US. England and Denmark have already moved to calling COVID an endemic. Read all her informative and mostly optimistic comments in this [article](#), summarizing our interview with her on Wednesday's Update Call.

CMS updates fact sheet on Casper reports for hospices. To assist hospice providers in understanding and using the CASPER QM Reports that now include claims-based measures, CMS has updated this fact sheet to reflect the changes to the HQRPs based on the (FY) 2022 Hospice Final Rule. This renamed and revised document, *Getting Started with HQRPs CASPER QM Reports* can be found in the **Provider Toolkit** section of the [HQRPs Requirements and Best Practices](#) webpage.

Home and Community Based Services Funding Sign on Letter. LeadingAge signed on to a letter to Congressional leadership on the importance of HCBS funding in the Senate version of BBB. Over 250 groups signed the letter which can be found [here](#).

Sign On Letter for FY22 Funding. LeadingAge joined a national letter calling on Congress to enact an omnibus fiscal year 2022 bill as soon as possible. The current Continuing Resolution (CR) is funding all federal programs at FY21 levels until February 18. If Congress cannot agree to FY22 appropriations bills, it is possible the CR could be in effect for all of FY22. This would be disastrous for HUD affordable housing and other agency's programs, which require increased funding from one year to the next to simply serve the same number of households. "Whether serving health, education and training, child

welfare, nutrition, substance use disorders, housing or other needs, appropriated programs cannot meet today's demands with yesterday's inadequate funding," the letter signed onto today by LeadingAge says. Aging services stakeholders are [urged to also join the letter](#). The letter is coordinated by the Coalition on Human Needs and has a sign on deadline of February 9.

Weekly HHS Therapeutics Update. In the [weekly presentation on the status, availability, and distribution of therapeutics](#), HHS officials described plans for distribution of antivirals over the next 2-4 weeks. They included a segment on equity, during which they shared a [list](#) of 200 HRSA funded health centers across all states that will receive direct allocations (not through state or territorial health departments) of oral antiviral products.

USCIS Responds With New Guidance on Expedited Renewals for Employment Authorization

Applications at USCIS. On December 3, 2021, LeadingAge joined the American Health Care Association (AHCA) and several long-term care organizations in sending another a Coalition [letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), around the healthcare industry workers who are impacted by processing times when they are seeking Employment Authorization Documentation (EAD) renewal applications.

EADs, otherwise known as a work permit, are granted when an individual has a pending Immigration Petition for Permanence. The card permits non-citizens to legally work in the United States for a U.S. employer and it must be tied to an underlying status. For example, individuals may apply for a work permit because they have a pending work visa application.

In response to the concerns raised in the December 3 Coalition letter, and others within the healthcare worker community, we received [positive news from the USCIS](#). Effective immediately, healthcare workers who have a pending EAD renewal application, or an EAD that expires in 30 days, or has already expired, can request expedited processing of their EAD application. To determine whether an individual is a qualifying healthcare worker, the USCIS website now has information available at: <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/filing-guidance/how-to-make-an-expedite-request>. Applicants can also request expedited processing by calling the USCIS Contact Center at (800) 375-5283.

Pfizer officially asks for emergency use authorization for vaccine for children under 5. Pfizer and their partners BioNTech submitted a formal request to the FDA for Emergency Use Authorization for kids aged 6 months to 4 years. They are asking for an EUA for two doses but expect a third does will ultimately be needed and will submit for authorization on the third shot later. The announcement can be found [here](#).

FROM HHS: FDA Approves Second COVID-19 Vaccine: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration [approved a second COVID-19 vaccine](#). The vaccine has been known as the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine; the approved vaccine will be marketed as Spikevax for the prevention of COVID-19 in individuals 18 years of age and older. Spikevax meets the FDA's rigorous standards for safety, effectiveness and manufacturing

quality required for approval. Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine [has been available under emergency use authorization \(EUA\)](#) for individuals 18 years of age and older since December 18, 2020.

Congressional Hearings Addressing COVID-19 Price Gouging Scheduled this Week. Last week, LeadingAge and several LTC organizations sent [a joint letter](#) to the White House COVID-19 Response Team coordinator requesting the federal government to look into exorbitant nurse staffing agency rates. More than 200 Members of Congress sent a similar [letter](#) to the White House requesting federal agencies investigate staffing firms conduct and pricing.

This week in Congress, Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Chair of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security convened a hearing titled, “Stopping COVID-19 Fraud and Price Gouging,” on Tuesday, February 1, 2022. This hearing allowed the FTC to address ongoing consumer price gouging scams that have resulted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and proposals to strengthen FTC enforcement against unfair and deceptive practices. Witnesses will include Samuel Levine, Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee Chair Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) announced the Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee will hold a legislative hearing on Wednesday, February 2, “Pandemic Profiteers: Legislation to Stop Corporate Price Gouging.” This hearing will consider legislation (H.R. 675) to empower the Federal Trade Commission and state attorneys general with the enforcement tools they need to effectively go after price gougers. It is unclear whether this hearing will address issues specific to temporary staffing agencies but it is possible the tools discussed will be applicable. LeadingAge submitted questions specific to temporary staffing agencies which we hope will be included.

LeadingAge and CAST Join Over 300 Stakeholders to Ask Congress to Create Permanent Comprehensive Telehealth Reform. LeadingAge and its Center for Aging Technologies (CAST), joined 336 of the nation’s health care provider and patient organizations, in sending a [letter to Congress](#) urging their leadership in facilitating a pathway to permanent comprehensive telehealth reform. The letter outlines recommendations that would provide sufficient time for Congress and the Administration to authorize the continuation of all current telehealth waivers through December 31, 2024, instead of the HHS Secretary’s waiver authority for telehealth that could expire immediately upon expiration of the public health emergency (PHE). It also calls for HHS to complete all feasible evaluations related to telehealth by fall 2023 and combine findings into a single dashboard with recommendations to inform permanent telehealth legislations. The final request is for Congress to pass evidence-based telehealth legislation for implementation in 2024.

Did you know? LeadingAge tracks state legislation related to aging services in an easy to use format. The beginning of a new year marks the beginning of the work of many state legislatures. Knowing that legislators are often interested in initiatives in other states that are supported by stakeholders, LeadingAge members frequently ask about proposed and enacted legislation in other states. Our [State Legislation Tracker](#) is updated nightly, based on activities across all the states related to COVID, workforce, and key provider settings across the continuum. It may be just what you need when meeting with state policy makers.

Congress Works to Reauthorize Violence Against Women Act. Up for reauthorization since 2018, the Violence Against Women Act is once again making its way through Congress. While the House passed VAWA reauthorization in 2021, that bill stalled in the Senate over a gun purchasing provision opposed by the National Rifle Association. In December, Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Joni Ernst (R-IA), and Dick Durbin (D-IL) announced that they had developed a bipartisan Senate framework to modernize and reauthorize VAWA. This legislation is expected to be introduced very soon and, as Senator Feinstein said, it will “expand access to emergency housing support for survivors.” For now, affordable multifamily housing providers continue to follow [current VAWA laws](#), including those promulgated by HUD after the 2013 reauthorization.

NEW Workshop—Opening Doors to Aging Services: Messaging That Moves Perceptions. This virtual workshop will prepare LeadingAge members to use research-based messaging to boost awareness and build confidence in providers across the aging services sector. Participants will learn how to use the messages developed for Opening Doors to Aging Services, including applying the messaging framework, employing the most effective messengers, and using and sharing the LeadingAge Language Guide. Thursday, February 17, 2-3:30 pm. [Registration for this live, virtual workshop is open now.](#)

LeadingAge.org Relaunch Snap Survey. LeadingAge is excited to be launching a new website later this year. To learn how LeadingAge.org can best serve our members, we need to hear from you! [Please take a minute to complete this 4-question survey.](#)

Reimagining Long-Term Care. To inform the evolving discussion and improve long-term care, [the entire February 2022 issue of the Journal of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine](#) will be available and downloadable without cost throughout 2022. The February issue is devoted to evidence-based papers and recommendations to guide reimagination of the long-term care workforce, societal issues, models of care, financing, payment, regulation, and services. Check out the article co-written by Robyn Stone, LeadingAge’s Senior Vice President of Research and Co-Director of the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston, [“The Inevitability of Reimagining Long-Term Care.”](#)