



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

March 11, 2022

**LeadingAge Coronavirus Call.** 2022 looks promising for providers of services for older adults but some significant obstacles remain. LeadingAge members are anxious to hear about the latest trends on workforce and occupancy and how knowing about these trends can support planning for the “new normal” with COVID-19 in 2022. On Monday March 14 at 3:30 PM ET we will talk with Lana Peck, Senior Principal at the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing and Care. She will discuss the latest data from the NIC WAVE study of trends in senior living. She will offer insights on workforce and occupancy challenges and guidance on how LeadingAge members can prepare for growth this year. If you haven’t registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#).

**Home Health Advisory Group Recap Available.** LeadingAge launched a new Home Health Advisory Group on March 1 as an opportunity for members to receive updates on changing legislation, regulation, operational, and policy issues and provide feedback to LeadingAge on priorities in home health. This first discussion included a discussion of home health priorities including workforce and was followed by policy updates from LeadingAge staff and member discussion. Read more [here](#). Please email Katy Barnett [kbarnett@leadingage.org](mailto:kbarnett@leadingage.org) to be added to the Home Health Advisory Group list. The next call will take place Tuesday, April 5.

**CMS Home Health, Hospice, and DME Open Door Forum Recap.** On February 24, CMS hosted an Open Door Forum for Home Health, Hospice and Durable Medical Equipment (DME) providers with some important updates for home health providers on Notice of Admission as well as updates on home health and hospice public reporting refreshes. You can view an article with these updates and more [here](#).

**Will the \$1.5 T spending bill become law? And, ongoing discussion about COVID funding being cut from Omnibus package.** The Senate is rushing to pass the \$1.5 Trillion package before Friday, when the government runs out of funding at midnight. The bill will require 60 votes to pass and overcome a filibuster. If the bill is not passed by Friday night, another continuing resolution is likely, to give the Senate more time to finish its work.

The Senate is not discussing COVID response money because it was cut from the House bill. In response to the White House’s \$22.5 billion request to cover immediate needs to avoid severe disruptions to the nation’s COVID response, the House initially included some funds (\$15.6 billion) in the Omnibus bill, but not the full amount. It appeared there was bipartisan agreement on the \$15.6 billion, offset in part by rescinding some unspent state funds. The deal fell apart when some Democrats objected to losing some of their relief funds. COVID response funds were stripped from the bill. It is unclear how the funds will make it into law without the state relief offsets. House Democrats are working on a bill that is separate from the Omnibus measure, but it is unlikely to survive in the Senate. Among the immediate needs that are at risk of not being covered are testing capacity, set to decline this month; the supply of mAB

treatments, which will run out in May; and the supply of antiviral pills like Paxlovid, which will be exhausted in September.

**Links to the most recent Omni full text can be found on the [House Rules Committee Website](#). The appropriations bills and accompanying summaries and reports can be found on the [House Appropriations Committee Website](#)**

**LeadingAge Statement on the FY2022 Omnibus Appropriations Bill:** Our press statement on the bill can be found [here](#).

**Medicare Telehealth Flexibility Extensions Included in FY 22 Omnibus.** The House is set to vote on a sweeping fiscal year (FY) 2022 Omnibus spending package that funds the government through the end of the fiscal year. One of the key extensions in the Omnibus spending package is the continuation of several key Medicare telehealth flexibilities. Most notably, the legislation would allow these flexibilities to be extended for 151 days (or five months), starting the day after the end of the public health emergency (PHE). Given that we expect the public health emergency to end in July, this would allow the telehealth extensions to be in place through mid- December. You can read an article [here](#), which also outlines the key Medicare telehealth flexibilities included in the omnibus.

**Article for hospice providers on what they need to know about the omnibus:** An article can be found [here](#) that breaks down what hospices need to know with regards to telehealth and the omnibus. It also discusses a report on respite care and some report language on bereavement that are included in the Labor-HHS report.

**State Legislation Addressing Price Gouging in Staffing Agencies:** 12 states have introduced legislation addressing the increasingly high prices of staffing agencies. [Click here](#) to see more details on the states. Please reach out to Eram ([eabbasi@leadingage.org](mailto:eabbasi@leadingage.org)) if you have any questions.

**CMS Advance Care Planning Webinar.** CMS is hosting a webinar on advance care planning with the Southcentral Foundation (SCF) of Alaska, where providers support patients in coming up with advance directives and taking steps to see they are carried out. Topics covered will include the creation of advance directives, durable power of attorney for health care, living wills, DNR/DNI orders, patient rights, and more. Register [here](#).

**Interview with Dr. Nimalie Stone:** On Wednesday's coronavirus call, we welcomed back Dr. Nimalie Stone from the CDC to talk about the CDC's guidance change on community levels. A summary of the interview can be found [here](#).

**Interview with Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly – March 7.** Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, Director of the Clinical Epidemiology Center at Veterans Affairs St. Louis Health Care, joined the March 7, LeadingAge Coronavirus Update call. He responded to questions from Joe Franco and from callers. A summary of the interview is [here](#).

**LeadingAge Submits Comments on Proposed MA Rules.** LeadingAge submitted [comments](#) to CMS today on its proposed CY2023 rules for MA, SNP and Part D plans. Here is an [article](#) that discusses some highlights from the rule and our comments.

**CMMI Accepting Applications for ACO REACH model:** CMMI announced recently that it is replacing the Global & Professional Direct Contracting model on January 1, 2023 with a new ACO REACH model. This new model looks similar to direct contracting but has a new focus on health equity, provider-led

organization participants and ensure beneficiary freedom of choice and other protections. This redesign of the model is in response to stakeholder feedback including input from LeadingAge. Here is an [article](#) that goes into more detail on some of the changes and provides details on how providers could apply to participate.

**“Does The House Fit? Residents’ Experiences of Home Accessibility.”** New research released from the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University looks at peoples’ experiences with their housing’s accessibility. According to the research, of the nation’s households, about 5% or 6.8 million, have at least one resident who has a hard time getting into, getting around, or using their home. *More* than half of households who had a hard time using their home were living in a household headed by someone 65 or older. Fully 10% of households headed by someone 80 or older had a resident with a difficulty using the kitchen, bathroom, or both. Among older adult-headed households, one-third of households with a resident who used a manual wheelchair, electric wheelchair, a crutch, or other mobility aid also reported difficulty navigating or using the home. This compares with just 2% of older adult households without a resident who used a mobility aid. The researchers also found that housing fit was linked to both income and tenure status. Across age groups, higher income residents had better housing fit, the researchers found. Ten percent of households with incomes below \$30,000 reported fit difficulties as compared with just three percent of households with incomes of at least \$75,000. Older renters had poorer housing fit as compared with owners, with almost a quarter of renters over 80 reporting difficulties getting around or using the home as compared with closer to 15% of owners in this age group. Read the new research [here](#).

**New Ad Council Tools: COVID Vaccine Hesitancy Among Direct Care Professionals.** Even as this most recent wave of COVID-19 wanes, providers know how important it is to ensure that caregiving professionals are fully vaccinated and boosted. LeadingAge leveraged the Ad Council’s “It’s Up to You” campaign to develop materials especially for Black and Hispanic direct care professionals. These toolkits include messaging guidelines and communications tips sheets, as well as social media graphics, handouts, and posters, and are FREE to LeadingAge members:

- [Hispanic Care Professionals Toolkit](#)
- [Black Care Professionals Toolkit](#)

In addition to providing these materials to members, this project boosted the visibility of caring professionals (and LeadingAge) by including them in a high-profile national Ad Council campaign for [Black](#) and [Hispanic](#) communities.

**Creating a Trauma-Informed Culture to Support Well-being.** Join us Monday, April 11 at 2:00 p.m. ET for a webinar delving into the details of how a trauma-informed care framework can help you assess, guide, and create safety and support in your organization. Discounted for LeadingAge members! [Register today](#).