



## Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

March 5, 2021

**Vaccine hesitancy concerns? Trying to get access to monoclonal antibodies? Check out the LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Calls next week – 3:30 Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday.** On Monday, March 8, we'll talk with Sigal Barsade from the Wharton School about the [report](#) CMS asked her to lead the work on - on vaccine hesitancy and behavioral science based solutions. On Wednesday's call Dr. George Mensah from the National Institutes of Health will join us to talk about some of the root causes of vaccine hesitancy and how we can get to the "moveable middle" with residents and staff. On Thursday we will welcome Dr. David Wong as he will discuss a new coalition looking to expand the staff and use of monoclonal antibody treatments for providers. As Congress gets closer to the finish line on the next COVID-19 relief bill and the Administration continues to battle COVID, get vaccines out, and put nominees in place, there will be plenty of policy updates all week. If you haven't registered for the calls, you can [join here](#).

**Opportunity for nurses who work in long-term care – still time to sign up!** The Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC) is recruiting nurses who work in long-term care settings for a new peer learning and support project, the LTC Nurse Leaders Circle. It's open to nurses of any level who work in any long-term care setting with current work in or simply an interest in improving access to palliative care services for residents. ***They can either be employees of facilities, or employees of hospices, ISNPs, or other entity that provide care in long-term care.*** There is a preference for those who work in settings with a significant number of minority residents. Participants of this Circle get access to CAPC's courses and resources (which can be used to obtain continuing education credits), as well as a chance to learn and share ideas and challenges with their peers across the country. Anyone interested can apply via this [link](#) and there is more information in [this flyer](#).

**Did You Hear These Key Highlights From the LeadingAge Town Hall On COVID-19 Vaccines?** Providing key educational resources for frontline care workers is vital as providers work to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence. LeadingAge, in partnership with the Black Coalition Against COVID-19 and Blackdoctor.org produced an informative and engaging town hall that can be shared with direct care workers, residents and the public to tackle the difficult issues surrounding vaccinations for coronavirus. Check out some highlights of this town hall as national experts such as Dr. Cameron Webb from the White House and Dr. Amanda Cohn discuss the current status of the pandemic and vaccines starting 11 minutes into the conversation. Be sure to also watch the final panel a little over an hour in that features direct care staff from LeadingAge members who provide their insights on why the vaccine is so important and how they worked with their fellow staff members to build confidence. Miles Lee, a life enrichment coordinator from Forest Hills Senior Living in D.C. said "I believe we have the tools to help solve this issue; we should use them." This Town Hall is another great tool that answers the tough questions surrounding the available vaccines but also gives real guidance and education for front line care workers in aging services. The Town Hall can be [viewed here](#)

**CMMI Models on Pause.** Both the Direct Contracting Geographic Model and the Primary Care First – Serious Illness Population (SIP) track are under review by CMMI and on pause for now. SIP was slated to start on April 1<sup>st</sup> and will not; no other information has yet been provided.

**Ways and Means Announces Racial Equity Initiative.** House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-MA) announced the creation of the Committee’s Racial Equity Initiative (REI) and appointed Rep. Terri Sewell (D-AL), Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), and Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV) to lead the working group. The REI represents the next phase of the Committee’s work to address the role of racism and other forms of discrimination in perpetuating health and economic inequalities in the United States. The creation of the REI follows a report, “[Something Must Change: Inequities in U.S. Policy and Society](#),” and framework, “[A Bold Vision for a Legislative Pathway Toward Health and Economic Equity](#),” that the Committee put out earlier this year highlighting the policy proposals and the pillars the Committee will focus on as it works to advance equity in this Congress and beyond. The full press release can be found [here](#).

**Vaccine hesitancy resources and help.** LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Calls over the next few weeks will feature brief, one-minute segments on ways members can promote the successful vaccination of at least 75% of their workforce by June 30. We will cover developments in the news, research, and innovative practice that support our members in attaining high vaccination rates in your organizations. Progress towards our collective goal will be measured by both formal and informal means, including periodic member polls. The segments will be added once each week to our resources [here](#).

**New vaccine hesitancy report from the behavioral sciences.** A panel of behavioral scientists produced a report to support CMS work on helping people who work in long-term care settings accept vaccines and overcome hesitancy. “[COVID-19 Vaccination Uptake Behavioral Science Task Force Final Report](#)” summarizes the insights and recommendations of the panel. Vaccine hesitancy according to the report is an attitude, not a behavior. The experts divided the adult population in the US into fifths, with one fifth fully welcoming vaccines, one fifth refusing, and the other three fifths in the “moveable middle.” They reviewed all the recommendations and their potential use with each group.

**Resources for Older Adults and Caregivers.** Alyce Bayne from the University of Chicago shared the results of a study done by NORC on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing for community-dwelling older adults and their caregivers during the pandemic. They compiled a compendium of resources many will find valuable. An summary article can be found [here](#). The study can be found at NORC.org.

**Top 10 Survey Citations and tips for success.** State survey agencies have resumed annual surveys in nursing homes. LeadingAge staff analyzed the top 10 findings and deficiencies using the Quality, Certification, and Oversight Reports (QCOR). While some deficiencies are consistent with past reports there were many differences, including related to new F-tags. The pandemic has changed the top 10 landscape. [Here](#) is an article on the new top 10 along with tips for success on each one.

**Using pandemic lessons to inform LTC reform.** The Urban Institute released a new report, “[Reforming Long-Term Care with Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).” The report is based on an expert meeting

that was held in October, sponsored by the Hartford Foundation. Among the domains identified for focus are: Medicaid redesign; promoting HCBS; integrating health care and long-term care; enhancing pay, benefits and training for LTC workers; and recognizing disparities in need for care and access. This is likely not the last report we'll see on capturing pandemic lessons.

**From HHS:**

**Pandemic Trends: (from Dr. Walensky)** We continue to see troubling signs in the trajectory of the pandemic. The most recent 7 day averages in cases and deaths saw increases of around 2% compared to the last 7 days. We are at a critical nexus in the pandemic. Cases are at a point where they could resurge, the B117 variant is spreading and could hijack the success we've made, and people are fatigued and ignoring the mitigation measures that we know work to stop the pandemic. We must remain vigilant and we must take the right public health actions to protect ourselves and others.

**Approach to Addressing Variants: (from Dr. Fauci)** There are currently five variants detected in the U.S., many that have shown increased transmissibility. To limit the spread of variants, the Administration is ramping up vaccination with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> doses of current EUA vaccines, conducting studies on booster doses, conducting clinical trials on variant-specific vaccines, and looking into Pan-CoV "universal" vaccines which would be able to handle variants and would address other pandemic coronaviruses in the future.

**Vaccination Toolkit:** CDC updated their [COVID-19 vaccination toolkit](#). Find sample messages and post for social media outlets about the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Understanding Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines:** [Viral vector vaccines](#) are a type of vaccine likely to be among the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States. The recently approved Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a viral vector vaccine. Viral vector vaccines use a modified version of a different virus (the vector) to deliver important instructions to our cells. For COVID-19 viral vector vaccines, the vector (not the virus that causes COVID-19, but a different, harmless virus) will enter a cell in our body and then use the cell's machinery to produce a harmless piece of the virus that causes COVID-19. This piece is known as a spike protein and it is only found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19.

**LTC financing reform proposal.** On March 23 from 1:00 – 2:00 Eastern time, Representative Tom Suozzi – and a panel that includes Marc Cohen, Co-Director of the LeadingAge LTSS Center @ UMASS Boston, will discuss the Congressman's WISH Act (Well-Being Insurance for Seniors to be at Home Act) at the monthly meeting of the Long-Term Care Discussion Group. The WISH Act would involve a payroll contribution of .5% to fund catastrophic LTC insurance. The insurance benefit is tied to the individual's lifetime earnings. WISH envisions that private LTC insurance products would be developed to fill the gap between triggering the need for services and the start of the catastrophic benefit. More information and zoom details are [here](#). No pre-registration needed.

**Updated Provider Relief FAQ on cost-based reimbursement impacts:** HHS has added the link to instructions for completing cost reports. The link to the instructions does not work due to a typo. Here is the correct link: <https://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Paper-Based-Manuals-Items/CMS021935>. The updated language also clarifies that if Medicare or Medicaid payments are based upon a provider's costs that HHS considers these to be full payment. Therefore, Provider

Relief Funds could not be used for additional costs as they are considered covered by the existing Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement. However, if there are caps on the cost-based reimbursement under Medicare or Medicaid and actual costs exceed the reimbursed amount then those unreimbursed incremental costs could be reimbursed using PRF. The FAQ reminds providers that PRF cannot be used to cover costs that are reimbursed from other sources or for which other sources are obligated to reimburse.

### **Survey on Trauma-Informed Care**

The [Center on Aging and Trauma](#) of The Jewish Federations of North America's Holocaust Survivor Initiative is inviting LeadingAge members to participate in a national survey on Person-Centered, Trauma-Informed (PCTI) Care. The Center is collecting information about the capacity of organizations that work with older adults and family caregivers to provide PCTI. [This anonymous survey](#) will take around 15 minutes. Questions? Contact [Marsha Greenfield](#)

### **A New Pathway to Request Staff Support for Monoclonal Antibody Infusions**

LeadingAge is part of a new opportunity that connects providers looking to use monoclonal antibody infusions with interested and qualified Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers to provide staff support for administering COVID-19 monoclonal antibody infusions in LTCFs. The Long-Term Care Infusion Support Activity (LISA) is a collaborative initiative with goals of reducing hospitalizations, preserving U.S. healthcare system capacity, and protecting America's seniors against COVID-19. [Read our analysis](#) of the initiative and [review the full details](#) about the LISA initiative.

### **Life Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Post-COVID Compliance**

Join us April 8 for a webinar that will detail life safety and emergency preparedness challenges nursing home and hospice providers should plan for as they return to pre-pandemic operations. [Learn more and register here.](#)

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Information and Resources**

As we work toward increasing vaccination rates among our aging services providers, be sure to take advantage of the resources available from CDC, CMS, and HHS:

[CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkits](#)

[CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit for Long-Term Care](#)

[HHS COVID-19 and Flu Public Education Campaign](#)

[CMS COVID-19 Partner Resources](#)

[Vaccinating Homebound Persons](#)

[Guidance for Vaccinating People with Disabilities at Vaccination Clinics](#)

[Ensuring Equitable COVID 19 Vaccine Access](#)

Visit the [LeadingAge Vaccine Resources](#) page for the latest updates, analysis and education, and resources, and check out our [Vaccination Tips and Tools](#) page for valuable educational resources.

### **Journal Focuses on Substance Use and Abuse Among Older Adults**

The LTSS Center @UMASS Boston's Verena Cimarolli offers a helpful guide to the research shared in the latest issue of [Generations](#) on substance abuse among older adults. Several of the articles in the issue

have special relevance to LeadingAge members and the work the LTSS Center is doing. [Read Verena's overview](#) of the articles that stood out to her.

**Save The Date: 2021 LeadingAge Lobby Day**

Calling all members! Be part of our 2021 Lobby Day, happening virtually on April 21. It's your chance to meet with elected officials and advocate for issues that are important to aging services. We'll share more information and registration information soon.