



PACE Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

April 29, 2022

LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Call for Week of May 2. New normal, again? How's that going to look? What next? As we enter our third year in the pandemic a group of leading infectious disease and public policy experts convened to create the COVID-19 Roadmap. Their goal and purpose was to lay out how the country can enter the new normal stage of the pandemic and manage the virus without eliminating it.

On our **Monday, May 2 3:30 PM ET** Update Call we will talk with one of the lead authors of the report, Dr. Michael Mina the Chief Science Officer of eMed and formerly a researcher at Harvard University. He will talk about the key pillars of this roadmap and answer your questions on how we can continue to protect those we serve during this new phase.

On **Wednesday, May 4 at 3:30pm ET**, we will welcome Brendan Jackson from the CDC's COVID-19 response team. He will talk about the CDC's guidance regarding current COVID-19 treatments and also take LeadingAge members questions on the latest guidance from CDC for COVID-19. 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 previous calls and other "members only" content.

CMS "Caregiver Support" Webinar: Successful aging programs include services in the continuum, such as adult day care, that promote caregiver supports. The CMS webinar highlighted this LTSS focus area with education on how to better understand practices that ensure caregivers' needs are met. The impacts of caregiver burnout, compassion fatigue, and grief were explored, along with the need for caregivers to find balance with self-care, social connectedness and community supports. More information from CMS on this and related topics is offered at [here](#).

New Data on Heat-Related ED Visits. As heat waves are becoming more frequent and severe across the country, the Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ) [released](#) a first-time data analysis looking at emergency department (ED) visits due to extreme heat exposure in 2019. States with the highest population rates of ED visits with heat exposure include Mississippi, Arkansas, South Carolina, Kentucky and Missouri. The states with the lowest rates were Alaska, Wyoming, New York, Montana and Colorado. Rural counties were more likely to have higher rates of ED visits related to heat exposure—a finding that challenges assumptions that health problems related to extreme heat are most acute in urban areas.

Advance Care Planning, For Gun Ownership. Colorado researchers [published](#) a tool to help gun owners and family members plan ahead for safe firearm use and transfers in the event of disability or death. The Firearm Life Plan kit has four parts that stress personal responsibility, safety, and the importance of

being prepared. First, the kit lists of warning signs (physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional) that might cause a gun owner to use a gun inappropriately. Second, the guide features conversation prompts for family members and friends who might be concerned about an older gun owner and for older adults who recognize the value of planning ahead. The third part is most practical and calls for people to create an inventory of their firearms, where they're stored, who should get the firearms when the owner dies or is willing to relinquish them, and when transfers should occur. The final component of the guide is a "legacy" section that asks gun owners to share memories and stories about their firearms and what they've meant to them.

Congressional Update. The House and Senate are back for what's looking like a busy [May legislative session](#). We expect continued focus on Ukraine aid in the coming weeks. However, there are other items on the agenda that LeadingAge is tracking very closely, including [COVID relief](#). When lawmakers recessed two weeks ago, the Senate had failed to reach an agreement to pass a \$10 billion COVID funding package for testing, treatments, and vaccines. The stalemate was due to a disagreement over a border-enforcement policy, known as [Title 42](#), named after a section of the U.S. Code that prevents immigrants from seeking asylum. Another concern was the final funding amount of the \$10 billion, which began as a request from of \$22.5 billion from the Administration. As members of Congress return to Washington to engage in further discussions on COVID relief, we will be there to continue fighting for additional assistance, including additional funding for provider relief, which was not included in the last proposal.

Additional items of importance are government funding and [economic relief](#). President Biden sent the Administration's Fiscal Year 2023 budget request to Congress on March 28. Of course, Congress will identify its own priorities, as it holds the Constitutional power of the purse. In fact, House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders will meet this week to discuss top-line funding for Fiscal Year 2023, and hearings are already underway to exam the Administration's budget request, which we are watching closely.

Meanwhile, the House and Senate are considering how to move forward on an economic package. Unfortunately, the Build Back Better Act hit a wall, and ongoing discussions have been a challenge, but the fight isn't over. A separate innovation package was developed to invest in scientific research, funding the development of new technologies, and bolstering domestic production of semiconductors. Both chambers have passed their respective versions with significant differences between the two bills, and members of Congress are now beginning the process of reconciling the two versions to produce a final bill for passage. Given that this bill might be one of the larger measures that Congress passes, it might also provide an opportunity to include additional priorities. So please stay tuned for additional updates down the road.

White House Fact Sheet on COVID treatments. Today the White House released a [fact sheet](#), "Biden Administration Increases Access to COVID-19 Treatments and Boosts Patient and Provider Awareness." Topline messages in the announcement:

- The Administration is nearly doubling the number of places antivirals will be available in the coming weeks.
- There's a new effort to stand up federally-supported Test-To-Treat Sites to meet demand and increase equity in access.
- The Administration is doubling down on efforts to help health care providers understand and prescribe treatments.

- Now that supply is available, public awareness and education about treatments will be ramped up.

A fall surge is likely. Interview with Ghinwa Dumyati, infectious disease physician and professor of medicine. A fall surge is likely and protections like vaccines, boosters, masking, distancing, and improving ventilation are additive. COVID therapeutic drugs should be increasingly available over the next weeks, but Paxlovid interacts with more than 100 medications, so that needs to be considered in determining what will work best for the individual. Dr. Dumyati, of the University of Rochester Medical Center joined the Coronavirus Update Call today and shared her insights which are summarized in [this article](#). One question came up after Dr. Dumyati left: if a person was fully vaccinated with two doses of Moderna or Pfizer or one dose of J&J in early 2021, do those vaccines offer much protection? Her answer was that compared to the unvaccinated person, there is some protection. Hospitalization, however, if the person does contract COVID, is lower in those who are boosted. See this [CDC explanation](#) about rates of COVID-19 hospitalizations by vaccine status.

Senators' Letter to DOT Asks to Prioritize Seniors and People with Disabilities. On April 22, Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) [sent a letter](#) urging U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg to ensure that these investments make travel accessible for older adults and people with disabilities. The letter emphasizing that all new start construction projects under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) investments, must be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—the landmark civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life—and the Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in programs conducted by federal agencies or receiving federal funding.

Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day is May 16. The Administration on Community Living is hosting the fifth annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day on Monday May 16, aimed at empowering professionals with the latest tools to improve the lives of older adults in their community. The event is sponsored by ACL along with several cosponsors. You can register and find more details [here](#). The agenda includes a session on trauma-informed care and one on practical strategies to navigate mental health resources and services for older adults and caregivers.

COVID-19 Was Third Leading Cause of Death in the United States: CDC released [two reports on CDC's National Vital Statistics System](#) to look at death rates in the United States and find that differences in death rates still remain between certain racial and ethnic minority groups. The first report provides an overview of provisional U.S. mortality data for 2021, including a comparison of death rates for all causes of death and for deaths involving COVID-19. The study found that the overall age-adjusted death rate increased by almost 1% in 2021 from 2020. Overall death rates were highest among non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaskan Native and non-Hispanic Black or African American people. For the second year, COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer.

Nominate Your Exceptional Colleagues Today. The LeadingAge annual awards honor individuals who embody excellence in mission-focused aging services leadership, are models of quality and innovation, and are making outstanding contributions to our field that merit national recognition. Nominations are currently being accepted in three categories: [Award of Honor](#), [RWJF Award for Health Equity presented by LeadingAge](#), and [Joan Anne McHugh Award for Leadership in LTSS Nursing](#). The deadline to submit your nomination is June 17, 2022. [Learn more about the award criteria and nomination process](#)