



Home Health and Hospice Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

April 8, 2022

LeadingAge Coronavirus Calls Next Week. What can we expect in this latest phase and what does the “next normal” look like? Should older people get a fourth shot now or later? Is the answer different for those in residential care compared to those not in residential care? Alongside the Biden Administration’s latest COVID-19 recovery plan, a group of leading experts came together to create a plan to map out the next phase. On **Monday, April 11**, we will be joined by **Dr. Michael Mina**, one of the leading authors of the COVID-19 roadmap and assistant professor of epidemiology and a faculty member in the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics at the Harvard School of Public Health. He will talk about steps we need to take for the “next normal” of the pandemic and answer your questions.

On **Wednesday, April 13**, we will talk with **Dr. Paul Reinbold**, vice president & chief medical director at Acts Retirement-Life Communities (Acts). He will talk about the timing and importance of the 4th COVID-19 shot for older adults and will talk about how his community is working to keep residents and staff safe. **All calls are at 3:30pm ET.** If you haven’t registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#). You can also find previous call recordings [here](#).

Money Follows the Person Demonstration Expansion: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Webinars for Applicants. CMS released a Notice of Funding Opportunity that will offer up to \$110 million to expand access to home and community-based services (HBCS) through Medicaid’s Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. The new NOFO authorized under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 will make individual awards of up to \$5 million to states and territories that are not currently participating in MFP. These funds will support states during the initial planning and implementation of their programs. CMS will hold two webinars to provide details about the MFP Demonstration Expansion, and to answer questions from potential applicants regarding this funding opportunity. Registration is required. The webinars will be held on April 13, 1 – 2pm ET, [Register here](#); and April 27, 1 - 2pm ET, [Register here](#). Please contact MFPdemo@cms.hhs.gov with questions.

New Resources on Home Health Value Based Purchasing. The Home Health Value-Based Purchasing (HHVBP) Technical Assistance (TA) team announce two new resources are now available on the Expanded HHVBP Model webpage: 1) April edition of the Expanded HHVBP Model [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#), to assist home health agencies in understanding common terms used in the expanded Model and requirements under the Calendar Year (CY) 2022 Home Health Prospective Payment System (HH PPS) final rule. 2) [HHVBP Model Newsletter April 2022](#) which covers a commonly asked questions and upcoming opportunities for education.

Inpatient Hospice 1135 Waivers Ending. CMS [released](#) a memo stating that certain waivers pertaining to in-patient hospices will lapse in 60 days from the issuance of today’s memo. Specifically, there are four waivers around life safety codes, facility and equipment inspection, and windows and doors that will end Monday, June 6.

4 Million MA Beneficiaries Have Supplement Home Care Benefits. A report [released](#) by ATI Advisory found that over 4 million Medicare Advantage beneficiaries receive home care benefits through Special Supplemental Benefits for Chronically Ill which became available for MA plans after passage of the CHRONIC Care Act in 2020. Specifically, In Home Supports and Services has seen a huge increase in popularity. IHSS is technically a non-medical benefit and 14% of MA plans are now offering the benefit. The report looks at other in home benefits like food and produce and transportation which have also seen considerable increases in use.

Congressional Update: Unfortunately, [the latest COVID funding agreement has hit another snag](#) that will more than likely imperil Senate-passage before Congress breaks for its two-week Easter recess. Without a deal on amendments Republicans want to offer over immigration and border enforcement, the Senate rejected a procedural motion needed to begin debate on the bill, which would provide \$10 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services to buy more therapeutics, vaccines and testing supplies and prepare for future virus variants. This isn't the first obstacle that the COVID funding agreement has encountered. The \$10 billion agreement is nowhere near the \$22.5 billion initially sought by the Administration, and \$5 billion in foreign pandemic assistance was also stripped from the deal. So stay tuned as Congress continues to wrestle with additional funding for COVID assistance.

White House Plan to Address Long COVID. The Biden Administration rolled out a plan to increase awareness and the response to the long-term effects of COVID-10, directing HHS Secretary Becerra to lead an interagency effort to coordinate research and support for long COVID patients. [Here](#) is an article on the release and here is the [White House fact sheet](#).

Aging Services Provisions in Administration's Proposed FY 23 Budget. We shared an analysis of the [housing related provisions of the President's proposed FY 23 budget](#) and what they could mean for aging services organizations last week. [Here](#) is the Department of Health and Human Services counterpart, with some Department of Labor, USCIS, and other elements too. (Note: Medicare and Medicaid, along with other entitlement/mandatory programs are not part of this discretionary budget.) The President's budget is not the final word, of course. Congress has a lot of work to do on the budget before it is finalized in time for the beginning of FY 23 on October 1, 2022. (And it's more likely we'll see some Continuing Resolutions as we move closer to midterm elections, rather than a final FY 23 budget put in place on time.) However, it is possible to get insights into what the Administration is planning to prioritize and focus on by looking closely at this proposed budget.

RESCHEDULED CMS Home Health, Hospice, and DME Open Door Forum. CMS rescheduled the next Open Door Forum to Wednesday, April 20 from 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET CMS will host an Open Door Forum for Home Health, Hospice and Durable Medical Equipment (DME) providers. To participate by phone: Dial: 1-888-455-1397 & Reference Conference Passcode: 5109694.

Home Health Preview Reports and Star Rating Preview Reports Now Available. Preview reports for the July 2022 Home Health Compare and Five-Star Rating refresh are now available in iQIES. The home health OASIS reporting will be based on the standard number of quarters. This refresh resumes the reporting of all claims-based measures which have not been reported since October 2020. The claims-based measures are calculated excluding Q1 and Q2 2020 data. For additional information, please see the HH QRP COVID-19 Public Reporting Tip Sheet in the downloads section of the [HH Quality Reporting Training webpage](#) and the [Home Health Data Submission Deadlines webpage](#).

HRSA Announces Process for Submitting Late PRF reports: HRSA [announced](#) additional information on how providers can request to submit a late Provider Relief Fund report for Reporting Period 1(RP1) based upon extenuating circumstances. Such circumstances include situations we've heard reported by members where their parent organization submitted a report on the General PRF distributions but the nursing home did not submit a report for its Targeted SNF Distribution. Additional circumstances apply and are outlined in this LeadingAge [article](#) on the newly-announced Late Reporting Request process. Members who have discovered errors in their RP1 report must go through a separate process to make corrections or revise their RP1 reports. This is also outlined in the article.

Updates to CMS Vaccine Mandate Guidance: CMS updated memos [QSO-22-07-ALL](#), [QSO-22-09-ALL](#), and [QSO-22-11-ALL](#), revised guidance for Interim Final Rule Medicare and Medicaid Programs Omnibus COVID-19 Healthcare Staff Vaccination. Updates include clarification around the expectations for assessing compliance with the requirement to ensure all staff are vaccinated. Specifically, revisions address concerns that many providers are not able to maintain a line listing of the vaccine status for contracted staff. Additional clarification regarding assessing compliance for repeat surveys occurring within 6 weeks was also made.

Health Misinformation RFI and Webinar: U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy is calling for stories about personal experiences related to health misinformation to deepen our collective understanding of its sources and impact. Learn more about the Request for Information (RFI) [here](#). The deadline for submitting to the RFI is Monday, May 2.

FROM HHS: Give Your Community a Boost. The FDA published the FDA Voices: “ [Give Your Community a Boost: Combatting Misinformation Through Communication and Research](#),” by RADM Richardae Araojo, Pharm.D., M.S., Associate Commissioner for Minority Health and Director of the Office of Minority Health and Health Equity. April is National Minority Health Month, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services selected “Give Your Community a Boost” as this year’s theme. Over the last two years, the FDA has worked tirelessly with our U.S. government partners, medical product manufacturers, international partners, and additional stakeholders to address COVID-19. Although the pandemic continues, significant strides have been made in efforts to protect the health of Americans. The FDA authorized and approved multiple vaccines, authorized several treatments, increased available testing options such as at-home tests and provided countless educational resources in a variety of languages.

Coverage of At Home Tests by Medicare Announced: The Biden Administration announced coverage of 8 over the counter at home covid tests per month under Medicare Part B. Coverage of at home tests under private insurance and Medicaid were announced in January and the Administration promised to work on coverage for Medicare beneficiaries. The program starts April 4 (today) and continues until the end of the PHE. More info at: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-covers-over-counter-covid-19-tests>

Hospice Proposed Rule Overview. Last Wednesday, CMS issued the FY2023 Hospice Wage Index Proposed Rule. CMS has proposed a 2.7 percent hospice increase for FY23 and has proposed to have a 5-percent cap on hospice wage index changes. CMS is also looking for feedback on health equity quality measure development. Read a full review of the rule [here](#).

GAO Reports on Telehealth in Medicaid. The Government Accountability Office [released](#) a report on the utilization of telehealth in five states during the COVID-19 public health emergency. From March 2020-

February 2021, 32.5 million services were delivered via telehealth vs. 2.1 million services the prior year. The five states included in the report were Arizona, California, Maine, Mississippi, and Missouri. GAO made two recommendations in this report: 1) the CMS Administrator should collect and analyze the effect of telehealth on quality of care and 2) the Administrator should determine, based on their analysis, how to develop guidance to assist states in making telehealth coverage and payment decisions.

Notice of Admissions Update. CMS [issued](#) a change order to the Medicare Benefit Policy Manual to clarify the Notice of Admission (NOA) process, establish the requirements for NOA submission, and clarify the definition of an allowed practitioners. An MLN article was also [issued](#) to review the changes and expectations for new NOA process. The process will be fully implemented by May 26, 2022.

Home Health CAHPS Quarterly Review Newsletter. The Home Health CAHPS Team [posted](#) the next issue of the HHCAHPS Coordination Team Quarterly Review (CTQR). The April 2022 issue includes agency participation tips for the brand new HHCAHPS Calendar Year 2024 Annual Payment Update period, and some insights from the Vendor Update Training session instant polls.

Congressional Meetings at Leadership Summit Update. Thank you to our state partners for helping to make this year's congressional meetings at Leadership Summit a success. 148 LeadingAge members and state partners attended 89 meetings on Capitol Hill. Please continue to fill out your meeting reports so we can see what follow up is needed with congressional offices. We also appreciate the photos and social media posts, so please send Joe Franco at jfranco@leadingage.org the photos from your meetings and your activities on Capitol Hill. If you also have any key insights, tips or ideas in working with a congressional office, please contact Joe Franco as we plan our advocacy activities.

Nominate Someone for a LeadingAge Award Today! The LeadingAge annual awards honor individuals that 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](#)

Collaborative Care Tech Summit 2022. Registration is now open for the virtual [Collaborative Care Tech Summit](#) taking place June 7-8, 2022. This year's theme, "Connecting and Strengthening Workforce," will offer solutions to challenges LeadingAge members and other care providers are experiencing. [Learn more about the summit](#) and [register today](#) for invaluable insights on solving these workforce challenges.

Fraud Alert: Annual Meeting & EXPO Offers. Please beware of any companies reaching out via email or phone with hotel or other offers claiming to be related to the [2022 LeadingAge Annual Meeting & EXPO](#). These companies are not associated with LeadingAge. Maritz is LeadingAge's official housing bureau and we do not make dedicated hotel-only solicitation emails or calls. Hotel reservations and registration will be available beginning in July **only through the annual meeting website**. Questions? Email meetings@leadingage.org.

LeadingAge Member Directory: Please Review & Update Your Listing. LeadingAge.org includes an [Aging Services Directory](#) of members that is available to the general public. This directory is included in our new [Keep Leading Life](#) campaign to raise awareness about the full aging services sector. Members can make changes directly to their listing, adding people, updating info, and even sharing testimonials and

photos. Your staff who are designated as Company Managers have access to make edits. [Visit this page](#) for more information, and if you have questions or get stuck, contact us at MyLeadingAgeSupport@LeadingAge.org or call 202-783-2242. (And find Keep Leading Life campaign materials, which debuted at the 2022 Leadership Summit, at openingdoors.org/resources/ for you to download.)