



Nursing Home 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](#).

CMS to Terminate 1135 Waivers. CMS announced Thursday that they will be terminating a number of 1135 waivers currently utilized by LeadingAge members across settings. Waivers will be terminated in two groups with some terminating in 30 days and others in 60 days. Specific to nursing homes, the nurse aide training waiver is included in the 60-day termination group. Recall that individuals working in this capacity will have four months from the termination of the waiver to complete requirements for certification in their states. The 3-day stay waiver is not set to terminate at this time. More information is available [here](#).

National Academies Nursing Home Quality Report Released Wednesday. The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) released the long-awaited report titled [The National Imperative to Improve Nursing Home Quality – Honoring the Commitment to Residents, Families and Staff](#). At the webinar releasing the report, Committee members outlined seven broad goals and associated recommendations that taken together could profoundly change the delivery, financing, and quality of care in nursing homes. The 605-page report and interwoven recommendations drives home the overarching goal to make high-quality, person-centered care equitable, safe and secure for our nation’s aging population. The committee made clear that the recommendations cannot be analyzed one by one, they are interdependent. For example, higher staff wages require higher reimbursement. LeadingAge will continue to analyze the report in more depth, but [here](#) is an initial article summarizing highlights for nursing home provider members.

Interview with Tamara Konetzka on Wednesday Update Call. Tamara Konetzka, Louis Block Professor in the Department of Public Health, University of Chicago and member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on the Quality of Care in Nursing Homes, appeared on

today's LeadingAge Update Call to talk about the report. [Here](#) is an article covering the interview. She stressed that the recommendations in the report only make sense when viewed as a whole; importantly, she said that requiring nursing homes to pay higher wages is directly tied to higher reimbursement for nursing homes. She was clear that nursing homes do not bear responsibility for the challenges described in the report or for the solutions. Congress, the Administration, nursing homes, QIOs, and others all have a role to play in changing the way the nation delivers, finances, and regulates nursing homes. Dr. Konetzka stressed that there is not enough money in the system to provide the best quality care.

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.

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.

Follow Up from NHSN on Event-Level COVID-19 Vaccination Forms: CDC held 2 webinars last week on the new event-level COVID-19 vaccination forms. These forms will replace the excel data tracking worksheets, set to be retired in May. NHSN users received [this email blast](#) today summarizing key

information about the reporting forms. These forms are currently available in the NHSN system and use of the forms is optional.

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.

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.

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>

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.

LeadingAge members who provide nursing home services: What are some data points that would be red flags for nursing homes in a risk-based compliance system? At the Leadership Summit and again in our meeting last week with CMS, Jon Blum asked what we consider to be red flags that might indicate some impending quality concerns. They are looking at what they call a risk-based compliance system, in which some nursing homes get additional focus. One example a LeadingAge member mentioned was leadership changes. Another suggested increases in pressure ulcers. If you have some ideas to add to the list, whether they are along the lines of leadership changes or related to specific survey or reporting elements, please sent them to Janine (JFinck-Boyle@LeadingAge.org).

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](#)

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.)