



Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

May 21, 2021

Upcoming Update Calls – what’s going on in CMS CCSQ? What’s on the horizon? What is CMS doing to help on staff vaccine hesitancy? Hear member ideas – interesting mask policies, vaccine encouragement, and . Calls at 3:30 ET Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. **On Monday, May 24, we’ll welcome Dr. Lee Fleisher, CMS Medical Director and head of the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality.** We’ll ask Lee any unanswered questions about the IFR as well as hear what’s coming next down the pike. **On Wednesday, May 26,** hear from LeadingAge member Gus Keach-Longo as he explains how his community worked with residents and staff to change their rules around masking in public areas. **Our Thursday, May 27,** conversation will include Lori Summers from LeadingAge member community the Park Danforth who will help unpack how her organization achieved high vaccination rates with staff through communication and workplace culture. If you haven’t signed up yet, you can join the call by [registering here](#).

Free Protect Nursing Homes tool. We wanted to share with you a (free) **new resource for nursing home/SNF leaders seeking to control infections at skilled nursing facilities:** [ProtectNursingHomes.org](https://protectnursinghomes.org). Built by Yale, UCLA and US Digital Response, the site provides **rich detail on staff interconnectivity** that has long been desired by nursing home administrators and health leads, but that has been difficult to attain. It can be a **helpful tool in outbreak management for COVID as well as other infections** that more routinely challenge nursing homes. As previously featured by the CDC and a LeadingAge national call, an overview and demo of the tool can be found [here](#). Additionally, the Yale team is available to provide briefings and demos for individual state partners, conferences, and webinars. May be a nice addition to any programming you are running for members and partners. To schedule, please contact: protectnursinghomes@yale.edu.

Resources for Compliance with Vaccine Reporting Rule: We have received several requests for resources to comply with the requirement in new interim final rule CMS-3414-IFC that nursing homes and ICF/IIDs must provide education on and offer the COVID-19 vaccine. CMS mentions several resources in the rule and in memo QSO-21-19-NH. We have compiled these resources and added a few of our own that we think will be helpful. Find this resource compendium [here](#).

FROM HHS:

FDA Authorizes Time for Refrigerator Storage of Thawed Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Prior to Dilution, Making Vaccine More Widely Available: Based on a review of recent data submitted by Pfizer Inc., the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is [authorizing undiluted, thawed Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine vials to be stored in the refrigerator at 2°C to 8°C \(35°F to 46°F\) for up to 1 month](#). Previously, thawed, undiluted vaccine vials could be stored in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. Pfizer Inc. submitted data to the FDA to demonstrate that undiluted, thawed vials of its COVID-19 vaccine are stable at refrigerator temperatures for up to 1 month. The updated [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#) (Vaccination Providers) is intended to help frontline workers understand the

revised storage time. The Fact Sheet is available on the FDA's web site. Read the full Emergency Use Authorization [here](#).

LTC Providers: The New 21st Century Cures Act Rules Apply to You!

If you are a nursing home, home health or other LTC provider, don't miss LeadingAge's next virtual event on the implications of regulations stemming from the 21st Century Cures Act on long-term post-acute care (LTPAC) providers. The webinar on **Tuesday, May 25 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. ET** will walk through how the recently released rules support the seamless and secure access, exchange and use of electronic health information. Speakers from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service (CMS) and Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) include:

Kianna Banks, Nurse Consultant, CMS

Scott Cooper, Center for Clinical Standards & Quality, CMS

Johnalyn Lyles, Division Deputy Director, Regulatory & Policy Affairs, ONC

Alex Mugge, Deputy Chief Health Informatics Officer, CMS

They will talk about the applicability to LTPAC of the CMS Interoperability Rule, ONC Information Blocking Rule, and other quality/reporting regulations and requirements. This virtual event is free, but registration is required. [Save your spot now](#).

Largest CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Effectiveness Study in Health Workers Shows mRNA Vaccines 94% Effective:

On Friday, CDC [put out a press release on the largest CDC COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness study in health workers](#), which shows mRNA vaccines to be 94% effective. The study was released as an *MMWR*, that [examined the interim estimates of vaccine effectiveness of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines](#) among health care personnel at 33 U.S. sites from January – March 2021. The first U.S. multisite test-negative design vaccine effectiveness study among HCP found a single dose of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines to be 82% effective against symptomatic COVID-19 and 2 doses to be 94% effective. The mRNA vaccines are highly effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 among U.S. HCP. This new CDC study adds to the growing body of real-world evidence (outside of a clinical trial setting) showing that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) protect health care personnel (HCP) against COVID-19. This assessment, conducted in a different study network with a larger sample size from across a broader geographic area than in the clinical trials, independently confirms U.S. vaccine effectiveness findings among health care workers that [were first reported March 29](#). Data for this assessment come from a network covering 500,000 HCP across 33 sites in 25 U.S. states, providing additional robust evidence that mRNA vaccines are effective against symptomatic illness in real-world conditions.

COVID-19 Vaccine Social Media Toolkit: CDC [updated the COVID-19 vaccine social media messaging toolkit](#). The page includes sample Facebook messages, Facebook digital resources, sample Instagram messages, Instagram digital resources, sample Twitter messages, and Twitter digital resources for the following topics: about the COVID-19 vaccines, vaccine benefits, vaccine FAQs, vaccine safety, what to expect after vaccination, and vaccine effectiveness.

Caregivers of People Living with Dementia: CDC [updated their guidance for caregivers of people living with dementia](#). Given the risks that older adults face from both COVID-19 and dementia, CDC is providing this additional guidance to caregivers of adults with Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to help them manage their patients' physical and mental wellbeing as well as their own wellbeing. Not all people living with dementia require caregivers.

Therefore, the degree of assistance a person needs will depend on the extent that their dementia has progressed. For people living with dementia, changes in behavior or worsening symptoms of dementia should be evaluated because they can be an indication of worsening stress and anxiety as well as COVID-19 or other infections.

GAO Study on Nursing Homes and COVID. The Government Accountability Office (GAO), the auditing and evaluation arm of Congress, issued a report [“COVID-19 in Nursing Homes: Most Homes Had Outbreaks and Weeks of Sustained Transmission from May 2020 through January 2021.”](#) The CARES Act directed GAO to monitor that federal pandemic response, including CMS’s oversight of nursing homes in light of the pandemic (which was covered in prior GAO reports). In this report examining the frequency and duration of outbreaks, GAO found that only 64 nursing homes nationwide had no outbreaks and 44% had more than four outbreaks. Chairs of several key House committees issued a [statement](#) on the GAO report, noting the previous administration’s “inadequate response to the pandemic placed our nation’s nursing home residents in grave danger.” They highlighted limited PPE and staffing shortages as a big part of the problem, and committed to work with the current administration to ensure that the federal government “better protects the American people, especially the most vulnerable.....from coronavirus and future public health emergencies.”

Background on the Interim Final Rule. Holly Norelli from the Division of Nursing Homes at CMS joined Thursday’s call to talk a bit about the new Interim Final Rule and reporting requirements. As a licensed nursing home administrator who only recently moved to her position at CMS, her [perspectives](#) were helpful.

LTC Access for Middle Income Americans. The Long-Term Care Discussion Group’s May meeting, set for May 25 from 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET, will focus on a new Milken Institute Report, [“New Approaches to Long-Term Care Access for Middle-Income Americans.”](#) Speakers include Nora Super, Senior Director of the Milken Center for the Future of Aging, and report authors Jason Davis and Caroline Servat. For details on how to participate, see the LTC Discussion Group’s [website](#). No registration is required.

Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce session coming up. Mathematica Policy Research’s Center for Studying Disability Policy, will hold an event, “Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce: Scaling Up and Sustaining Strategies That Work” on Thursday, June 3, from 12:00 to 1:30 PM ET. The session will highlight state and local initiatives that scaled up evidence based recruitment, retention, training, and career advancement strategies, as well as discuss COVID-related adaptations. Robyn Stone is a featured speaker. Other panelists include Bea Rector (Washington State Department of Social Services), Robert Espinoza (PHI), and Zulma Torres (Cooperative Home Care Associates). It’s free and you can register [here](#).

New Medicare and Telehealth Brief from KFF. The Kaiser Family Foundation released a brief today on [“Medicare and Telehealth: Coverage and Use During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Options for the Future.”](#) Nearly half (45%) said they had a telehealth visit between July and the fall of 2020. Over one in four of all community dwelling beneficiaries reported using telehealth during the same period. Of those who did use a telehealth visit, 56% used telephone only, while fewer used video.

On that point, Katie Sloan coauthored an op-ed – [“Audio-Only Technology Can Bridge the Telehealth Divide”](#) - with Allyson Schwartz, CEO of the Better Medicare Alliance, on the importance of allowing and paying for audio-only telehealth visits. This is essential to promote and advance equity in access to telehealth services.

Provider Relief Fund FAQs: Here are a couple of tidbits members have been asking about. First, as it stands right now, providers have until June 30, 2021 to spend all Provider Relief Funds. In addition, we still do not know when HHS will require the first report to be submitted on provider's use of the Provider Relief Funds. HHS had said they would provide adequate notice prior to when reports will be due and will provide webinars and/or office hours to answer questions. In the meantime, members should make sure they have registered in the [reporting portal](#). By doing this, they will receive communications from HHS once the reporting portal is open for report submission. Nicole has written a short [article](#) with this information for members.

Elder Justice legislation introduced in House. Legislation establishing a permanent Elder Justice Initiative in the Department of Justice will be marked up tomorrow by the House Judiciary Committee. The bipartisan Elder Abuse Protection Act of 2021 (H.R.2922), introduced April 30, creates the position of Elder Justice Coordinator to chair the initiative, which is authorized to coordinate and support DOJ's enforcement of elder justice, evaluating and disseminating model training materials for law enforcement and other personnel that come in contact with victims, covering such areas as how to appropriately respond to elder abuse, conduct investigations, and maintain online resources in both English and Spanish about elder justice.

Are you part of the COVID Community Corps yet? Yvanna Cancela from HHS joined Wednesday's call to talk about the role of trusted messengers in the We Can Do This campaign. Join the [COVID Community Corps](#) with a simple form and gain access to toolkits, updates and more.

Call for Applications: Jewish Federations Funding Opportunity. The Jewish Federations of North America's Center on Aging and Trauma seeks applications to expand person-centered, trauma-informed services for Holocaust survivors, older adults with a history of trauma, and/or their family caregivers. The RFP, program guidelines and application templates are at [AgingAndTrauma.org](#). Your intent to apply is due May 28 and the applications are due July 9, 2021. For more information, please contact Aging@JewishFederations.org.

Nominate Someone 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 18, 2021. [Learn more about the award criteria and nomination process](#). Questions? Please contact [Amanda Marr](#).

Building Communities of Strength Campaign. Join us throughout May as we mark Older Americans Month (OAM) and advocate for support of the aging services care infrastructure. Each May, the Administration for Community Living recognizes OAM to acknowledge the contribution of older adults. This year, the observance's theme "Communities of Strength," is especially relevant as the country debates the value of supporting our national care infrastructure. We're at a critical time for our country to renew and revitalize how we support older Americans and their families as millions of us live longer. Join us all month and check out our [toolkit of materials and ideas](#) on how to participate.

Fostering Emotional Wellbeing Among Team Members. May is Mental Health Awareness Month, which is a great opportunity to think about how your organization can help foster emotional wellbeing among

all its members. Need help getting started? [Watch this 19-minute QuickCast](#) to hear from Kelly O'Shea Carney, who explains the importance of a comprehensive systems approach to this important work. Looking for something more in-depth? LeadinAge is offering a shared [learning series focused on emotional wellbeing](#) that launches this summer.