



Nursing Home Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

May 26, 2022

LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Calls Next Week. We will not be holding a Coronavirus Policy Update Call on Monday, May 30th in observance of the Memorial Day holiday. On **Wednesday, June 1st at 3:30 PM ET**, we will be joined by mental health expert Gregg Levoy who will share his ideas of how important keeping commitment and passion alive in your organization and how mental health is something that everyone can use to succeed. He will help us unpack the real issues around burnout and provide ideas that can be used right away to help keep our workforce passionate and connected. 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.

Reporting Portal Reopens for Provider Relief Late Reporting: HRSA has notified providers who submitted a Late Reporting Request and have been approved to submit a late report for Reporting Period 2 (RP2). The [PRF Reporting Portal](#) has been opened for this purpose as of May 25 and approved providers have until Tuesday, June 14 at 11:59 p.m. ET to complete and submit their reports for RP2. RP2 covers PRF payments received between July 1 – December 31, 2020. Providers can find additional reporting resources [here](#). There will not be another opportunity for these providers to come into compliance. Failure to submit the report during this opportunity will require the provider to return all PRF funds from this payment received period. Here is a short [article](#) you can include on this topic in your newsletters.

Applying the Actual Emergency Exemption to Emergency Preparedness Requirements: CMS has updated previously-issued guidance to confirm that the actual natural or man-made emergency exemption continues to apply to COVID-19. Providers who continue to operate under their emergency plans or providers who have reactivated their emergency plans related to the COVID-19 public health emergency can count these operations toward satisfying the requirements for full-scale community-based or individual facility-based functional exercises. More information on the timing of exercises and the application of the exemption is available [here](#) in the CMS memo.

Fact Sheet on Grandfamilies and Kinship Families. Generations United has a new fact sheet on grandfamilies and kinship families. It incorporates data, policy and advocacy recommendations, infographics, and quotes from family members. Data related to the number of children living in grandfamilies and kinship families and the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic characteristics of families in which grandparents are raising their grandchildren are included. The fact sheet also provides details about the challenges these families face, from legal and financial issues to physical and mental health, housing, and education. See the fact sheet [here](#).

New Data on Surviving Spouses. Data released today from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau show a 5% increase from 2017 to 2019 in the number of adults 60+ who lost a spouse in the previous 12 months (from 1,151,000 to 2,206,000). According to the CFPB, surviving spouses' demographic, social, and household profiles differ significantly from the general 60+ population: surviving spouses are more than twice as likely to be women as they are to be men; more than one third of surviving spouses are 80+, compared to less than one fifth of the general older adult population; surviving spouses 60+ and older are also less likely to be in the labor force than their peers; and, surviving spouses are more likely to live alone than older adults generally. Of all homeowner surviving spouses 60+, 28% still had mortgage debt (of 90+ homeowner surviving spouses, 14% still had mortgage debt). Further, these pre-pandemic data show greater housing cost burdens among widowers. Among widowed homeowners, 35% spent 30% or more of their income on housing costs compared to 22% of homeowners in the general older population. Among older renters, 67% of new surviving spouses spent 30% or more of their income in housing compared to 57% of all older adults. "High home equity combined with high housing burden makes new surviving spouses who want to stay in their homes attractive targets for financial products that promise to alleviate their housing burden by leveraging their home equity," the CFPB warns. Read more [here](#).

Nursing Home Network: The next Nursing Home Network call will be Tuesday, May 31 at 2pm ET. Register for the Nursing Home Network [here](#).

Article on implications of Medicaid and PHE "unwinding": an article on the implications for older adults when PHE related Medicaid flexibilities end can be found [here](#).

Good infection control practices should enable safe summer gatherings for long term care residents and families. On Monday's Coronavirus Update Call, Dr. Salman Ashraf indicated that keeping an eye on community transmission, good infection control practices, boosters, and the use of Paxlovid should work to keep residents and community-dwelling older adults safe reasonably safe, even in the midst of the current rise in COVID cases. Read an article on the interview [here](#).

Report on Recommendations to Ease the Nursing Shortage: The Center for American Progress released a new report entitled "[How to Ease the Nursing Shortage in America](#)" which contains background on the nursing shortage and policy recommendations.

Study: Social Determinants and Race Impact Hospital and SNF to Home Transitions. A study [released](#) in JAMA Network found that patients transitioning from hospitals and skilled care to home settings often have different experiences impacted by social determinants and racial disparities. One in five patients participating in the survey-based study, reported at least one social determinant of health concern including 1) affording components of care (prescriptions, physical therapy, etc.) 2) access to transportation for follow up physician appointments, pharmacy, grocery store trips, 3) affording medical visits and copayments, and 4) having enough help at home. Most notably, transportation issues decreased the odds of completing follow-up appointments by 70%. Additionally, black patients had fewer follow-up visits scheduled or completed within the first two weeks after discharge.

Implications of Medicare Advantage Growth: A new [JAMA viewpoint](#) looks at the implications for the US health care system as we move toward the tipping point where Medicare Advantage will be the dominant source of Medicare coverage.

Surgeon General Focuses on Health Worker Burnout and Resignation. “We must take action,” begins an advisory report issued by U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. The report, “[Addressing Health Worker Burnout, The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory on Building a Thriving Health Workforce](#),” says that as we transition to recovery, “we have a moral obligation to address the long standing crisis of burnout, exhaustion, and moral distress across the health community. We owe workers more than our gratitude. We owe them an urgent debt of action.” It reviews what is known about burnout, discusses the role of COVID in exacerbating the crisis, and makes a clear case that there will be extreme worker shortages in all health care settings. The report offers recommendations that various stakeholders might act upon, though it is worth noting that extensive resources would need to be allocated to providers and governments to take many of the recommended actions. The report includes dozens of links to helpful resources. An article summarizing key points relevant to LeadingAge members from the Surgeon General’s advisory on health care worker burnout can be found [here](#).

Second Boosters and Nursing Homes: CDC strengthened recommendations for second boosters last week. Individuals over age 50 are now required to have a second booster to be considered “up to date” if their first booster was more than four months ago. Find out what this means for nursing homes [here](#).

Training on NHSN Changes: CDC hosted 2 webinars last week on the forthcoming changes to nursing home reporting in NHSN. Changes are scheduled for May 30. Read more [here](#). Initially, changes were expected in both the COVID-19 vaccination reporting module as well as the long-term care facility COVID-19 module; however, training on the LTCF module has been postponed and CDC was unable to confirm whether these changes would proceed as scheduled.

New Rankings of Best and Worst States to Die. A recent [analysis](#) by PolicyGenius ranked factors associated with individual death in each state and the District of Columbia. The organization based its findings on indicators such as the number of people who passed away in their homes, the availability of palliative care, access to green burials and funeral costs. Vermont, Utah, and Idaho came out on the top of the list of best places to die. Rounding out the worst states are Florida, Alaska, and Texas.

From HHS: Booster Shots of COVID-19 Vaccines Effective Against Omicron Subvariant: NIH [published a study](#) supported by the National Cancer Institute that booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines already in use produce neutralizing antibodies effective against a recent subvariant of the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant. Like all coronaviruses, SARS-CoV-2 — the virus that causes COVID-19 — has spike proteins on its surface that give it the ability to latch onto and infect cells. The Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 (BA.1) and its most common subvariant (BA.2) have spike proteins that are better at doing this than the original virus. Vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 prompt the immune system to make neutralizing antibodies — Y-shaped proteins that bind to the virus and prevent it from infecting cells. Researchers wanted to know whether the vaccines available today stimulate enough antibodies to protect people from BA.2. Researchers tested antibodies from the blood of 24 people after vaccination and booster doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. They also looked at antibodies from eight people who had recovered from COVID-19, seven of whom had been vaccinated. Participants who had a two-dose vaccination and received a booster shot had a high number of antibodies that could recognize BA.2 and BA.1. That number was even higher than the number of antibodies that could recognize the original SARS-CoV-2 after a two-dose vaccination. People who received only the primary two-dose vaccination had far fewer neutralizing antibodies against BA.2 — 20 times lower than the number of antibodies that recognized the original SARS-CoV-2.

Collaborative Care Tech Summit: June 7-8, 2022. How can the long-term and post-acute care (LTPAC) sector save hundreds of staff hours, streamline processes, speed up recruitment, and transform cost savings into increased team satisfaction and engagement? Join technology leaders at the [Collaborative Care Tech Summit](#) to learn how to address the unprecedented workforce challenges facing our sector through smart collaboration, technology, and innovation.

New Member Resource on CMS PPS Proposed Rule. On April 11, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued its 2023 Skilled Nursing Facility [proposed payment rule](#) that would cut provider reimbursements by \$320 million by implementing the previously delayed “parity adjustment.” To help members navigate the proposed rule, [LeadingAge has compiled the following resources](#):

- [NEW: Template Letter to CMS from Family Member\(s\) of Resident](#)
- [Send a Letter to CMS on Proposed Payment Cuts](#)
- [Tips from LeadingAge for Submitting Comments on Proposed Rule](#) (for LeadingAge members only; you must log in to your My LeadingAge account to access this resource)
- LeadingAge’s [initial analysis](#) of CMS Proposed SNF PPS Rule Release
- LeadingAge’s article on how the [Proposed Rule Brings Changes Big and Small to SNF VBP and QRP](#)

Financial Status of Provider Services Poll. LeadingAge is taking a quick pulse-check to gather information on the financial situation of the nursing homes, assisted living, and HCBS services our member organizations offer. Your answers will not be associated with your organization and will only be reported in aggregate. [Please take a few moments to complete the survey.](#)

It’s Not Too Late: Nominate Someone for a LeadingAge Award 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](#). Submit your nomination by June 17, 2022. [Learn more about the award criteria and nomination process.](#)