

- 1. Final Opportunity to Provide Feedback on Hospice Payment Rule; Thursday May 27th at 1pm ET.** We particularly invite feedback focused on the changes to hospice quality reporting program and changes to the labor portion of the hospice wage index, but look forward to all contributions to LeadingAge's comments. The rule comments are due on June 7. No registration is necessary, please just bring yourselves and your feedback. Please reach out to Mollie at mgurian@leadingage.org if you have questions or would like to provide feedback on the rule but are unable to attend either session.

- Zoom Link for May 27th session:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81460236913?pwd=eVVaNDJlZHRrZWtYMjVlek05ZEhoUT09j>

- 2. REGISTRATION OPEN – The HQRP – Understanding the Composite Quality Measure Webinar:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will be hosting a webinar on Wednesday, June 2, 2021 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. ET. The purpose of this training is to provide a general overview of the Hospice Quality Composite Measure and how it differs from individual quality measures. Specific topics include:

- What is a Composite Measure?
- Current HQRP Composite Measure.
- Calculation of a Composite Measure.
- Interpreting and Using Composite Measure Results.

Please register only if you know you will be able to attend the webinar, as space is limited. If you would like your name placed on a list to receive an email notification when the recorded version of the webinar is available, please [CLICK HERE to be placed on an email notification list](#).

[CLICK HERE to register for The HQRP – Understanding the Composite Quality Measure Webinar.](#)

- 3. CMS Announces Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE) Beta Test Recruitment:** CMS and their contractor, Abt Associates are now recruiting Medicare-certified hospice providers to participate in a beta test of the draft hospice patient assessment instrument called Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE). Recruitment ends June 14, 2021. Data collection is anticipated to begin in fall 2021. The detailed recruitment announcement and application for participation are available on CMS's [Hospice QRP Provider and Stakeholder Engagement](#) webpage. Those interested in participating should complete the application and email to HospiceAssessment@CMS.hhs.gov by June 14, 2021.

4. 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. These should be helpful to hospice and home health members who serve clients at nursing homes and also for inpatient hospices that must comply. 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](#).

5. Do Know All You Should About the 21st Century Cures Act?

New rules around the 21st Century Cures Act are now in effect—but do you know how it applies to your organization? And if it does, what are the government requirements you should know about? This virtual event will cover all the implications for aging services and other 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 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, C
- Elizabeth Myers, Deputy Director, Office of Policy, ONC

This virtual event is free, but registration is required. [Save your spot now](#).

6. Free Access to Providers! 2021 Collaborative Care & Health IT Innovations Summit

As members of the collaborative care community, we all know how important it is for long-term and acute care providers to stay current with the very latest technology and innovations that can improve care, reduce costs, and lead to better health outcomes for older adults. But, after a year of struggling with COVID, many of you have shared that your budgets just won't allow you to attend this year's Collaborative Care & Health IT Innovations Summit. That's why LeadingAge is opening up the June 8-10 event by offering [free registration to all care providers](#) across the collaborative care continuum. It's more important than ever for us to come together, learn, share, and imagine new ways of collaborating to improve healthcare for older adults we serve. [Register now](#).

7. Hospice and COVID-19: HHS ASPR Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) [released an interview discussing hospice during COVID-19](#). For a profession whose mission is to help terminally ill patients plan their final days and guide them and their loved ones through the passage emotionally and spiritually, a global pandemic presented the ultimate challenge. ASPR TRACIE met with Sarah McSpadden, RN, MSN, MHA, President and Chief Executive Officer of The Elizabeth Hospice, to learn more about her experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Home Care and Hospice During COVID – A Rural Perspective: HHS ASPR Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) [released an interview](#)

[discussing home care and hospice during COVID-19 from a rural perspective](#). In rural areas, home care and hospice often go hand in hand. Sue Heitkamp, RN, BSN, President, and Joelle Goldade, RN, BSN, CHPN, COS-C, HCS-D, Director of Clinical Operations (both of CHI Health at Home), shared how they carried out these important services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

9. **Recap of Senate Finance Hearing on COVID-19 flexibilities available.** An article on this week's Senate Finance hearing can be found [here](#). The hearing was largely about telehealth but many of LeadingAge's priorities related to hospice, home health, HCBS, and PACE were discussed.
10. **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.

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.

11. **State by State Mask Mandates Tracking Available.** Check out this new tracker on the LeadingAge website, showing [mask mandates and related guidelines in each state](#), as of May 19. Following the CDC guidelines on masks, several States have modified their mask mandates to align with the federal guidelines while others have relaxed rules in most settings. Twenty state governments require people to wear face coverings in most indoor public settings to curb the spread of COVID-19. The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico also have mask orders in place. To date, 19 states that had mask orders covering the general public have mostly lifted them. Eleven states did not impose mask mandates at any point during the pandemic. We will update this tracker weekly.
12. **Are you part of the COVID Community Corps yet?** Yvanna Cancela from HHS joined today'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.
13. **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.

- 14. 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](#).
- 15. 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](#).