



Home Health and Hospice Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

September 3, 2021

LeadingAge Update Calls. No call on Monday; it's Labor Day. How can housing and services be put together to help support older adults in the community? What's been the impact of the pandemic on the people who provide and live in HUD supported housing? What about booster shots and other vaccine issues? Monday, September 6 is Labor Day – no Coronavirus Update Call on Labor Day. On **Wednesday, September 8 at 3:30 PM ET, Richard Cho Richard Cho, Senior Advisor for Housing and Services in HUD's Office of the Secretary, and Ethan Handelman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Multifamily Housing,** will join LeadingAge's update call for members. The call will cover HUD efforts to expand the Section 202 program and integrate services into older adult housing. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here.](#)

Home Health Discharge Research Opportunity. Villanova University researchers are inviting home health clinicians to participate in a research study in 2022. The Home Health Discharge Decision Support: Impact on Patient Outcomes (HEADS-UP) study, funded through a Betty Irene Moore Fellowship for Nurse Leaders and Innovators, will be the first step in creating a clinical decision support algorithm to support home health clinicians as they make the critical decision to discharge from services or recertify for additional care. We are recruiting physicians and nurses to review approximately 10 online home health case studies. Clinicians will be reimbursed \$20 for each case reviewed. If you would like to serve as a clinical expert, please contact Rachel Borger (rborger@villanova.edu) and provide your name, email, work address, phone number, and number of years caring for older adults at home.

LeadingAge's Vision for a 21st Century Aging Services System. Today we posted [LeadingAge's Policy Vision: An Aging Services System for the 21st Century that is Bold, Equitable, Sustainable, and Transformative.](#) The paper outlines six elements including: financing long-term care; making communities a good place to grow old; home and community based services; affordable, accessible, service-connected housing; 24/7 models of care that are places people want to live; and workforce. These are mostly long range policy goals that are built around trends in population aging, consumer preferences, and service use. The package of reforms described in this long range vision is based on equity for people who use and those who provide care and services. We are sharing the paper with all members of the House and Senate and key committee staff.

CDC COCA Call on Coadministration of Flu and COVID Vax Recommendations. CDC will hold a Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Call on **Thursday, September 9, from 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET** on the 2021-2022 Influenza Vaccination Recommendations and Guidance on Coadministration with COVID-19 Vaccines. Presenters include Captain Lisa Grohskopf, MD and Andrew Kroger, MD, both of CDC will present the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations on flu for the coming season and on coadministration of flu and COVID vaccines. More details and link to register are [here.](#)

Mandates for Home Health in Massachusetts? COVID-19 vaccinations could soon be required for all home care and hospice workers in Massachusetts. Governor Charlie Baker (D) [announced](#)

[Wednesday](#) the mandate would take effect October 31, if it is approved by the Massachusetts Public Health Council.

Coalition Asks CMS to Rescind Behavioral Assumption from PDGM. The [Partnership for Quality Home Healthcare](#) sent a letter to CMS saying that the behavioral assumption cut scheduled to go into effect for 2022 is based on “flawed assumptions, data and methodology” and would harm providers.

That’ll Never Work Here: Vaccine Mandates in Places with Low Rates of Vaccination. Making the decision to mandate the COVID vaccine for staff is already a multifaceted challenge, but how about when your state or region is resistant to mandates or vaccines altogether? On **Thursday, September 9 from 3:00 - 4:00 PM ET**, hear from members who operate in states or regions that are not friendly to the vaccine mandate, and how they have navigated the issue successfully. Our panel will feature Jon Riewer, President and CEO of Eventide Senior Living Communities, Terry Barcroft, President and CEO of Wesley Woods Senior Living, and Pam Sullivan, VP of Strategy and Communication, Christian Living Communities. Jon will discuss the decision to mandate in Eventide’s Minnesota and North Dakota locations, Terry for Wesley Woods’ residence in Georgia, and Pam will do the same for CLC’s owned and/or managed communities in Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah. A lively discussion with the panelists will be followed by Q&A and updates on any news from CMS. To register, click [here](#).

Maybe everyone won’t need boosters. Interview with Dr. Monica Gandhi. Dr. Monica Gandhi of the University of California, San Diego, spoke on today’s LeadingAge Update Call. She noted that while Delta is highly transmissible, the messaging has been the opposite of what it should be. Vaccinated people have been terrified of becoming infected or transmitting infection; unvaccinated people have not gotten the right messages to help them step forward to be immunized. “We have to stop the doom-based messaging,” she said. This is all the more important vis a vis booster shots. She suggested that most people won’t need boosters, and in fact, could potentially be harmed by them (e.g., the rare instances of myocarditis in young men). She said four groups should be prioritized for boosters: immunocompromised people; older people with medical conditions; people in long-term care facilities; and healthcare workers. [Here](#) is an article covering the interview.

LeadingAge Co-Signs Letter to the State Department Requesting Employment-Based Immigrant Visas Be Prioritized. On August 30, LeadingAge joined 10 long-term care and post-acute provider organizations in sending a [letter to the Department of State](#), requesting foreign-trained nurses and health care workers immigrant visas be prioritized. Currently, the family-based immigrant visas are prioritized. If the State Department were to amend the immigrant visa prioritization, the entry of foreign-trained nurses and health care workers would be accelerated, and these health care professionals could be available to help with the LTC staffing crisis. We also offered to meet with the State Department to discuss the current workforce crisis we are facing. The letter was co-signed by: AHCA/NCAL, Argentum, The Society for Post-Acute and Long Term Care, Association of Jewish Aging Services, Lutheran Services in America, American Seniors Housing Association, National Association of State Veterans Homes, Pediatric Complex Care Association, National Association of State Veterans Homes, and American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR).

Reconciliation Update. Key House and Senate committees are drafting legislation that will be combined into the big reconciliation bill that should contain the provisions that we have been advocating for - Medicaid funding for staffing in HCBS and nursing homes; increased support for low income senior housing; adding dental, vision and hearing coverage to Medicare - we understand that the timetable has been shortened, so rather than seeing legislation by the 15th of September, expect bills to be released

right after Labor Day, and "marked up" in the House at least during the first 2 weeks. We know that there will be pressure to reduce the funding for HCBS and for Medicare expansion so we need to continue to press for the highest level possible. We think the timing has changed to coordinate with Sept. 27th when the House will vote on the bipartisan Senate infrastructure bill but this is a guess not a certainty.

Reconciliation Action Alert. All LeadingAge members were sent an action alert asking them to contact congress and help ensure that our key priorities are included in the infrastructure negotiations. The message to all members includes the following:

The Congressional Infrastructure Package Must Include Older Adults

The U.S. House of Representatives has moved forward on the negotiations for the infrastructure bills that have proposed big funding increases for key programs for older adults and LeadingAge members. Your elected leaders in Congress are negotiating a \$3.5 trillion infrastructure investment package -- so NOW is the moment to ensure that U.S. Representatives and Senators hear our voices and don't cut any of these proposed programs!

Send a message to your U.S. Representative and Senators today! (LINK:)

<https://mobilize4change.org/HrCcAjg>

CDC Advisory Committee Discusses Booster Shot Recommendation. During a meeting of the CDC's Advisory on Immunization Practices (ACIP), experts discussed the available data and considerations for booster shot recommendations. Some recent data has shown waning vaccine effectiveness in older adults, brought on by both the length of time since initial vaccination and by the Delta variant. However, the effectiveness remains very high; ACIP is reconvening the discussion next month to review more up-to-date data and potentially vote on the booster recommendation. CDC may recommend that boosters only become available to a certain population subgroup, like healthcare providers, residents of Long Term Care Communities, and other older adults. Pressure remains high from the White House to make booster shots available to all Americans by September 20. Today, officials from the FDA resigned in apparent protest to the White House's handling of the FDA authorization and CDC recommendation process for booster shots. More information on booster shot clinics in affordable here is available [here](#), and slides from the ACIPs meeting yesterday are available [here](#).

Updated CDC guidance on who is immunocompromised. CDC updated guidance today to explicitly state that a person's place of residence, such as in a long-term care setting, does not automatically qualify him/her as an immunocompromised individual in need of an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Read this guidance [here](#).

FROM HHS:

- 1. Overview of Barriers and Facilitators in COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach:** As the nation responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, this report from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) [provides an overview of lessons learned from vaccine programs, presents evidence on COVID-19 vaccine outreach, and discusses several examples of federal and state programs](#) that could serve as potential models for designing new vaccine outreach strategies.
- 2. NIH Launches Study of Extra COVID-19 Vaccine Dose in People with Autoimmune Disease:** The National Institutes of Health [has begun a clinical trial to assess the antibody response](#) to an extra dose of an authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine in people with autoimmune disease who did not respond to an original COVID-19 vaccine regimen. The trial also will investigate whether pausing immunosuppressive therapy for autoimmune disease improves the antibody response to an extra dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in this population. The Phase 2 trial is sponsored and

funded by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of NIH, and is being conducted by the NIAID-funded Autoimmunity Centers of Excellence.

- 3. COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review:** On Friday, CDC [released their weekly review](#) from the COVID Data Tracker. The weekly review discusses the [FDA's full approval](#) of the [Comirnaty/Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) for the prevention of COVID-19 disease in people ages 16 years and older.

Affordable Housing and LTSS: Promising Practices from Three States. Connecticut, New Jersey, and Massachusetts are taking proactive steps to deliver home and community-based services to residents of subsidized housing. A new report supported by AARP, AARP Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, and the SCAN Foundation examines how three states—New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts—are taking proactive approaches to linking affordable senior housing with services so older adults with low incomes can remain in their own apartments and communities. The report was co-authored by Alisha Sanders and Robyn Stone of the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston, and Rodney Harrell and Shannon Guzman of the AARP Public Policy Institute. It is part of a collection of Promising Practices published in July 2021 in conjunction with the release of [Advancing Action, 2020: A State Scorecard on Long-Term Services and Supports for Older Adults, People with Physical Disabilities, and Family Caregivers](#)

National Telepresser on Investing in Older Americans. LeadingAge is continuing to work with the media to ensure the voices of members and older adults are heard, as Congress decides on historic investments in care and services for older Americans. Yesterday we held a national media telepresser detailing how new investments would be a game changer for millions of older adults. Journalists participated from ABC News, Kaiser Health News, POLITICO, The Hill, The 19th, Modern Healthcare, Barron's, Bloomberg Law, McKnight's Long-Term Care News, McKnight's Senior Living, Skilled Nursing News and more. [Watch the recording](#) and [read the press release now](#).

Early coverage of the event included: *Skilled Nursing News*: [Long-Term Care Workforce Investment, Medicaid Boost, Could Pay 'Huge Dividends'](#) and *Home Health Care News*: [Staffing Shortages Force Home Health Giant Bayada to Deny 64% of Referrals in Key Markets](#)

Add your voice to the conversation: NOW is the moment to ensure that U.S. Representatives and Senators hear our voices and don't cut any of the proposed programs! [Send a message to your U.S. Representative and Senators today](#)