



Nursing Home 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](#).

Help with BinaxNOW Questions. We've heard from some state partners and members who have questions or concerns related to BinaxNOW shipments from HHS. We understand it to still be the case that nursing homes and assisted living communities in yellow and red positivity areas are receiving BinaxNOW test kits from HHS. CDC staff shared the [text of an email](#) that should have gone to all provider recipients of the tests on August 23. Recipients are asked to save and carry over unused tests; in the past the HHS BinaxNOW Team allocated tests in boxes of 40 and routinely sent extras. The email provides instructions on how to reinstate shipments if the provider asked that HHS stop sending them. It also offers two contact points. For questions related to shipment deliveries: ARDxUSGovernmentSupport@abbott.com. For questions related to the HHS BinaxNOW Distribution Program, the Binax Team Inbox: Binax.Team@HHS.GOV. Feel free to contact Jodi (JEyigor@leadingage.org), Janine (JFinck-Boyle@leadingage.org), or Ruth (RKatz@leadingage.org) with questions or concerns we can help with.

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](#).

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](#).

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).

Webinar on staff burnout. The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (AMDA) hosted a webinar on September 2nd - "The PTSD of COVID: The Heart of the Matter." The focus will be on moral injury and burnout, which contribute to attrition and staff losses. Resources from the session are available [here](#).

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. Important Change for SSI Recipients and Applicants:** The Social Security Administration (SSA) recently [changed their rules about how pandemic-related financial assistance](#) can affect an individual's eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or monthly SSI benefit amount. Previously, SSA had been counting many types of assistance as income and resources for SSI purposes, resulting in individuals having their SSI benefits reduced or suspended, or having their applications for SSI benefits denied. However, due to the severity of the ongoing COVID-19

pandemic, SSA has decided they will not count most types of pandemic-related financial assistance against SSI eligibility or benefit amount.

3. **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.
4. **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.

Action Alert: Vaccine Mandate. We have posted our action alert (<https://mobilize4change.org/Ca7S9hM>) for members to send to Congress asking for support for LeadingAge's position that all health care providers should be included in the Administration's expected vaccine mandate for nursing home staff. We have a letter drafted for members if you get a response, and talking points for meetings that we will share as needed. This is obviously a long-shot, but it is important to raise with Congress as the crisis continues. Marsha (MGreenfield@LeadingAge.org) is covering this issue and will be happy to work with members to get (virtual) meetings, respond to office questions, etc.

Nursing Home Workforce Support and Expansion Act. On August 27, Representatives Steven Horsford (D-NV), Barbara Lee (D-CA) and Jamaal Bowman (D-NY), introduced the Nursing Home Workforce Support and Expansion Act of 2021. The bill, supported by LeadingAge, will help provide funding to help long-term care providers recruit and retain health care professionals. This legislation is also included in the Elder Justice Reauthorization and Modernization Act of 2021, introduced earlier this month. The bill provides \$400 million for each fiscal year 2022 - 2025, to states and territories to support grant programs for workers providing care in post-acute and long-term care settings. Grant funds would be provided based on their population of adults over 65 years of age and people with disabilities.

The funds must be used to:

- provide wage subsidies to employees in post-acute and LTC positions
- provide student loan repayment or tuition assistance to eligible individuals
- guarantee affordable and accessible childcare for eligible individuals
- provide transportation assistance to eligible individuals.

The funds may be used to:

- establish a reserve fund for emergency financial assistance
- provide in-kind resource donations, such as interview clothing and conference attendance fees
- provide assistance with activities designed to lower barriers to employment, including legal assistance
- support eligible employers in offering not less than two weeks of paid leave per year.

Rep. Horsford's press release can be found here: <https://horsford.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-horsford-introduces-legislation-improve-nursing-home-care-nevada> .

The full text of the bill can be found here:

https://horsford.house.gov/sites/horsford.house.gov/files/HORSFO_024_xml.pdf

A summary of the bill can be found here:

https://horsford.house.gov/sites/horsford.house.gov/files/8.18.21.EJAW_one_pager_0.pdf

Nursing Home Advisory Group Special Town Hall Session. Our Nursing Home Advisory Group's next meeting, set for September 28 from 2:00 - 3:00 PM ET will be a special Town Hall Conversation. The majority of the call will be member feedback. This is members' opportunity to shape the LeadingAge Policy Priorities for 2022. If you are already a member of the group you will receive an Outlook invitation from Jodi. If you are not a member and would like to join, please email Jodi (JEyigor@LeadingAge.org).

The Staffing Crisis in Long-Term Care. On September 17, 2021 at 2:00 PM ET, Executive Director of the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing, Dr. Tara Cortes, will host a panel of experts to discuss the crisis in recruitment, retention, and adequate staffing in long-term care. Speakers and the focus of their presentations include: Robyn I. Stone, DrPH: Beyond Minimum Staffing in Long-Term Care: Understanding Staff Competencies and the Workplace Culture that Supports Good Practice; Ann Kolanowski, PhD, RN, FAAN: RN Staffing in US Nursing Homes: The Elephant In The Room; and Representative Jan Schakowsky: SOS: Save Our Staff: Improving Staffing Standards for Better Care. The webinar registration is available here:

https://nyu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5LzBc_SbQIWaXerFMtiMMw.

It's Budget Season: Plan for the Summer Enrichment Program. Don't miss out on the second year of the LeadingAge Summer Enrichment Program. In year one, members hosted 28 diverse interns at organizations around the country—and it's time to start planning for 2022. During the 10-week program next summer, undergraduate and graduate students will experience aging services, develop professional skills, and advance toward leadership positions in organizations like yours. LeadingAge helps guide you every step of the way. [Learn more today](#) and [register for an information session](#) at 1 p.m. ET on Sept. 9, 16, or 23.

LearningHub Content That Addresses Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Check out these QuickCasts, available for free to LeadingAge members:

- [What LeadingAge Members Need to Know About LGBT Aging](#)
- [Integrating Beliefs into Advance Care Planning Conversations](#)
- [Promoting LGBTQ Inclusivity in Aging Services](#)
- [Understanding Unconscious Bias](#)
- [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Know the Difference](#)