



Senior Housing Weekly

August 20, 2021

Weekly Housing Advisory Group Call: Vaccine Mandates, Booster Shot Clinics, Staffing Challenges. Join us on Monday, August 23 for our regular Housing Advisory Group call. We'll share information for housing providers about booster shot clinics; we'll also discuss the broader impact of vaccine mandates for nursing home staff and general staffing challenges in affordable housing. LeadingAge hosts Housing Advisory Group calls every Monday at 12:30pm ET, and any LeadingAge member can join. Email Linda (LCouch@leadingage.org) or Juliana (JBilowich@leadingage.org) to learn more.

HUD Leadership to Join LeadingAge Call. On Wednesday, September 8, **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. The call will take place as part of LeadingAge's regular COVID-19 update calls for the continuum of aging services providers on Mondays and Wednesday at 3:30pm ET. If you haven't registered for the calls, [you can do so here.](#)

Upcoming COVID-19 Update Calls for the Continuum, Mondays and Wednesdays at 3:30pm ET:

On **Monday, August 23 at 3:30 PM ET**, **David Grabowski**, Professor of Health Care Policy at Harvard Medical School and widely covered national commentator and expert on nursing home policy will join the Update Call to talk about the vaccine mandate plans announced by CMS on August 18. David has deep knowledge of long-term care issues and a deep and clear understanding of providers.

On **Wednesday, August 25 at 3:30**, join us to hear from **Christy Zeitz** from member Fellowship Square communities who will share how her staff is working to bolster morale amid trying times. Join us Monday to also hear the latest policy developments and to hear about LeadingAge's relevant advocacy work. If you haven't registered for the calls, [you can do so here.](#)

Update from Capitol Hill. Congress has adjourned until around September 20, except that the House will have to return to vote on the budget resolution (needed to give the House and Senate committees their "marching orders") and leadership will have to decide when to vote on the bipartisan infrastructure bill. The Speaker has indicated that the House will reconvene next week and vote probably on both of these Senate-passed provisions.

Advocacy Opportunity for Housing Providers: Urge Lawmakers to Support Once-In-A-Decade Investments in Senior Housing. As Congress continues its large-scale infrastructure efforts, our advocacy task is to make sure that legislation includes robust but essential investments for the aging services community. [Please take a minute to fill out our advocacy alert form in support of our affordable housing priorities](#) and other aging services priorities:

- \$7.5 billion for HUD's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program to expand the supply of affordable senior housing, increase the number of Service Coordinators, allow for age-friendly building retrofits, extend the IWISH demonstration program, and provide internet in HUD-assisted homes.

- \$400 billion for Home and Community-Based Services, including: sufficient funding to identify and serve older people who are eligible, increasing FMAP for HCBS by 10 points for 10 years, double investment in Older Americans Act supportive services, connecting HCBS and HUD-assisted units, incentivizing states to expand the PACE model, and investing in new models of care to support older adults in home and community.
- Enhanced federal investment in the LTSS workforce across the entire continuum of aging services, in order to support recruitment, training, advancement opportunities, and increased wages. Ensure equity in access to increased workforce funding across payment systems.
- Expansion of Medicare to include dental, hearing, and vision services.

CDC and White House announce plans for boosters. HHS public health and medical experts released a [joint statement](#) this week on the plan for COVID-19 booster doses. HHS, CDC, and FDA continue to study data to understand how long vaccine protection lasts. Right now, the only booster doses approved by FDA and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) are for immunocompromised people. CDC's independent advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, will continue to meet and discuss data on the evolution of the pandemic and the use of COVID-19 vaccines. ACIP will make further recommendations on the use of boosters for the public after a thorough review of the evidence. People who were fully vaccinated earliest in the vaccination rollout, including many health care providers, affordable senior housing residents, nursing home residents, and other seniors, will likely be eligible for a booster.

Notes from meeting with CDC on prioritizing assisted living, memory care, affordable housing, and other providers for boosters. We participated in a small meeting with CDC this week on the work they are currently engaged in to ensure that providers in other aging services settings are prioritized and know the steps they need to take to arrange for boosters. They encourage providers to start now, with the expectation the ACIP and FDA will approve boosters in September. Topline points are summarized below. When we shared these notes with CDC they added [additional information and links](#) to resources providers can use. More information will be available as plans are solidified.

- There are no plans to bring clinics into any provider organizations, as was done with the original Pharmacy Partnership.
- Planning for booster shots has to start happening now, but no one can activate any plans until the FDA and the ACIP make a recommendation about boosters. Right now, this has only happened for immunosuppressed individuals.
- Most people will need boosters around 8 months after they were fully vaccinated.
- Clearly CDC recognizes that aging services staff and residents are a top priority. CDC is working with provider associations, pharmacies and jurisdictions' health departments to plan ahead.
- CDC recognizes that the ideal situation is on-site clinics; the best way to make this happen will be good planning. Providers need to take the first steps to do this planning.
- CDC reports that 95% of nursing homes have a plan in place now to obtain vaccines. The nursing home message is that their first line is work with their LTC pharmacies. But they too need to work proactively and make their own plan.

- HHS recognizes it may be easier for larger providers with higher numbers of people to be immunized to negotiate onsite clinics; there's special attention and focus to be sure small providers and rural clinic needs are addressed too.
- Housing, AL, memory care, CCRCs, adult day, PACE and all aging services providers who offer services in congregate settings need to begin now to make plans.
- Providers need to do two things right now to get started: Figure out as well as possible how many doses you will need; and reach out to retail partners to begin to discuss how to bring them in for clinics or, if necessary, arrange to bring people to them.
- Planning can also include activating all the processes providers learned about in December – the spring. Consent forms, staffing clinics, setting up the space, communicating to families, etc.
- HHS is still working on logistics. Provider experience from the original roll out is incredibly valuable. CDC is looking for our input on things to keep in mind and plan for. Feel free to share your insights and ideas with LeadingAge policy staff and we will compile them for CDC.

Senator Wyden Proposes Sweeping Housing Tax Credit Reforms. Today, Senator Wyden released the Decent Affordable, Safe Housing for All (DASH) Act, which implements sweeping reforms to affordable housing financing in an effort to combat homelessness and expand affordable housing access. The legislation proposes to improve the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and make other fixes to the Housing Credit program. The bill also proposes reforms to local zoning and housing development practices, expands vouchers to combat homelessness, and includes a first-time homebuyer tax credit, a rental tax credit, and a Middle Income Housing Tax Credit. As the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the bill represents a major show of support for affordable housing from a key Senate office. Some portions of the bill are expected to move through the Reconciliation process currently underway in Congress. More info [here](#).

COVID-19 Vaccines Additional Doses: Codes & Payment. The FDA amended the emergency use authorizations (EUAs) for both the [Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) and the [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#) to allow for an additional dose in certain immunocompromised people. Effective August 12, 2021, CMS will pay to administer additional doses of COVID-19 vaccines consistent with the FDA EUAs, using [CPT code 0003A](#) for the Pfizer vaccine and [CPT code 0013A](#) for the Moderna vaccine. CMS will pay the same amount to administer this additional dose as they did for other doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (approximately \$40 each). CMS will hold and then process all claims with these codes after we complete claims system updates (no later than August 27).

Learn more about Medicare COVID-19 vaccine:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine Codes](#)
- [Payment](#)

Administration will not ask for extension of expanded unemployment benefits. Today Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh sent a letter to Congressional leaders saying they will not seek to extend the \$300 weekly boost to unemployment insurance and other expanded benefit programs set to end September 6. The letter to Congress noted that states can tap funds from the American Rescue Plan (not a new authority; this was always possible) if they opt to do that.

Annual Meeting Sessions: Highlights for Affordable Senior Housing Providers. Join Linda, Juliana, and the rest of the LeadingAge team at our Annual Meeting in Atlanta starting on October 24th! Sessions include bold visions for the future of Service Coordination, new approaches to senior housing preservation, and a primer on equity, diversity and inclusion in the aging services field. To top it off, we'll host networking receptions, movie screenings, a 5k run, and an "affordable housing huddle" – view the highlights for affordable housing providers [here](#) and get registered for the meeting [here](#).