



## Senior Housing Weekly

September 3, 2021

**No Weekly Housing Advisory Group Call on Labor Day; Next Call Sept 13: Staffing Challenges and Successes.** We won't have our regular Housing Advisory Group call this coming Monday due to Labor day; join us for our next call on Monday, September 13, for a discussion on staffing issues in affordable housing communities. Based on the results of a LeadingAge survey, we'll discuss the number and types of positions that housing communities employ, HUD support for staffing, recruitment and retention issues, training, and salaries. LeadingAge hosts Housing Advisory Group calls every Monday at 12:30pm ET, and any LeadingAge member can join. Email Linda ([LCouch@leadingage.org](mailto:LCouch@leadingage.org)) or Juliana ([JBilowich@leadingage.org](mailto:JBilowich@leadingage.org)) to learn more.

**HUD Leadership to Join LeadingAge Call: 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?** 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](#).

**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](#).

**Reconciliation Action Alert.** This week, 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.](#)*

Our advocacy task is to make sure that legislation includes robust but essential investments for the aging services community, including \$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.

**Maybe everyone won't need boosters. Interview with Dr. Monica Gandhi.** Dr. Monica Gandhi of the University of California, San Diego, spoke on this week'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.

**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. Meanwhile, this week, 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 ACIP meeting are available [here](#).

**Updated CDC guidance on who is immunocompromised.** CDC updated guidance 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](#).

**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.

**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.

**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](#).

**LeadingAge’s Vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Aging Services System.** Today we posted [LeadingAge’s Policy Vision: An Aging Services System for the 21<sup>st</sup> 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.