



Senior Housing Weekly

March 4, 2022

LeadingAge Housing Advisory Group Call. Join us on Monday, March 7, at 12:30pm ET, for our weekly Housing Advisory Group call. We'll continue our discussion of what the CDC's new COVID-19 Community Levels mean for your community, check in on CSPs, get the latest on HUD funding from Congress, and provide other news from HUD and the Hill. The slides from our February 14 conversation with USAging, the association of Area Agencies on Aging, are [here](#); slides from our February 28 conversation with UsAgainst Alzheimer's Center for Brain Health Equity can be found [here](#). Any LeadingAge member can join the Housing Advisory Group or submit advance questions by emailing Linda (lcouch@leadingage.org) or Juliana (jbilowich@leadingage.org).

LeadingAge Coronavirus Call. New research shows evidence of a higher risk of heart attacks, strokes, and mental health issues after COVID-19. On Monday, March 7, at 3:30pm ET, Dr. Ziyad Al-Aly, Director of the Clinical Epidemiology Center at the Saint Louis VA Health Care System will talk about research from his Center on the increased risk of cardiovascular and mental health issues up to a year after having COVID. He will talk about the importance of cardiovascular care post-COVID-19 infection in people of all ages, whether their COVID symptoms were mild or very severe. The cardiovascular [research](#) was published in *Nature Medicine* on February 7. Dr. Al-Aly will answer questions from callers and provide suggestions for aging services providers. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#).

HUD and HRSA Announce COVID-19 Response Supplies Available to Order by March 7. Medicare-certified rural health clinics and health centers supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) can now order [COVID-19 point-of-care testing supplies](#) and N95 masks from the [HRSA Health Center COVID-19 N95 Mask Program](#). HUD Multifamily owners/management agents can now submit new orders for point-of-care testing supplies and N95 masks to their FQHC/community health center partners by 11:59 p.m. their local time on Monday, March 7. Future ordering windows are currently being confirmed. HRSA encourages health centers to consider their ordering numbers as they work closely with their community partners to leverage HRSA's various COVID-19 response programs and distribute essential supplies to such populations as residents of HUD-assisted housing. Earlier this year, many housing providers experienced significant barriers to accessing test kits through their community health centers for a variety of reasons, including lack of supplies and unwillingness on the part of the health center to partner with housing providers. HUD has told LeadingAge that the supply at the health centers has significantly improved. To find your local health center, visit <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>.

VOANS March 27 Health & Housing Symposium. Volunteers of America National Services (VOANS) is hosting a 2022 Health & Housing Symposium on Sunday, March 27, 2:30 - 5pm, followed by a networking reception from 5 - 6pm. This Symposium is directly before the March 28 start of the 2022 LeadingAge Leadership Summit. The [VOANS Health & Housing Symposium](#) will include keynotes from Richard Cho, Senior Advisor for Housing and Services, HUD, and Alison Barkoff, Principal Deputy Administrator, Administration for Community Living, HHS. There are also two panel discussions: "Building Sustainable Opportunities to Address Health & LTSS Needs," and "Investments, Partnerships &

Strategies to Support Service Delivery.” The event is in partnership with LeadingAge and presented by Parker Health Group, Inc. This in-person, free event will be at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. [Click here to register for this free March 27 Symposium](#). A Symposium flyer, including the registration link, is [here](#). Click [here](#) for more information on the 2022 LeadingAge Leadership Summit.

For Prevention, Housing Communities Should Consider CDC’s New COVID-19 Community Levels Plus Other Factors. The new CDC COVID-19 Community Levels can help affordable senior housing communities’ COVID-19 practices reflect updated local COVID-19 measures. The new indicators announced February 25 continue to use case numbers but layer on COVID-19 hospital admissions of severely ill patients and healthcare strain (measured by percent of staffed inpatient hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients) to develop a new three-tiered COVID-19 Community Level risk chart that helps communities answer the question, What Prevention Steps Should You Take Based on Your COVID-19 Community Level?. The CDC says that some community settings might also consider additional layers of prevention (e.g., physical distancing, contact tracing) based on information and data about the characteristics of the setting. LeadingAge has asked CDC to provide explicit reference to multifamily housing in the new recommendations. For more on the new COVID-19 Community Levels and affordable housing, see this [article](#).

White House Sees Role for Service Coordinators in Mental Health Strategy. The White House’s strategy to address the national mental health crisis, outlined on March 1 in a “fact sheet” and formally announced during President Biden’s March 2 State of the Union speech, includes training HUD Service Coordinators, housing counselors, and Fair Housing grantee staff to be equipped to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and addiction among those they serve. During a call with LeadingAge and other stakeholders, senior staff from the White House and HUD explained that they will be training staff in these roles to recognize the signs of emotional distress and to connect residents with mental health resources, including by leveraging existing evidence-based approaches, like Mental Health First Aid. The Administration officials also discussed how the cost of the training would be covered and strategized about offering mental health training beyond Service Coordinators to other HUD property staff interacting with residents. Read more [here](#).

Impact of Rising Utility Costs on Residents of Multifamily Housing Programs. HUD’s Office of Multifamily Housing has developed [this flyer](#) of resources for owners and agents to maintain compliance with HUD’s utility allowance calculation requirements and to improve energy efficiency at Multifamily properties. The U.S. Department of Energy forecasts a three-year high in 2022 for average residential utility costs across the U.S. that may affect families who pay for some or all of their household’s utility bills, according to a March 4 HUD email. The new flyer references HUD’s recently released [FAQs](#) on conducting a Utility Analysis, which make some adjustments to the calculation process. A LeadingAge analysis of the new FAQ is forthcoming.

Housing x 3 in State of the Union! In his March 1 State of the Union address, President Biden referenced housing three times. Affordable housing stakeholders, who hope for even one mention of housing in this annual showcasing of what’s at the White House’s front of mind, are pleased (not that we’re counting!). Housing was referenced relating to the pandemic, to the Build Back Better Act, and to veterans. Read more [here](#).

HUD Posts Annual Revisions to Base City High Cost Percentage, High Cost Area and Per Unit Substantial Rehabilitation Threshold for 2022. Read the [Mortgagee Letter](#) and the [Housing Notice](#) on the Annual Revisions to Base City High Cost Percentage, High Cost Area and Per Unit Substantial Rehabilitation Threshold for 2022 that were published today.

New Housing an Aging Society Program. The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University has launched a new Housing an Aging Society Program. The program will be led by Jennifer Molinsky, a 2019 LeadingAge Annual Meeting & Expo speaker and longtime research trailblazer on affordable housing issues and older adults. The HAS Program will have five research priorities: housing affordability and stability; safety and accessibility; neighborhood livability; housing, supportive services, and healthcare; and, housing options. Visit the new Housing an Aging Society Program [here](#).

Largest Infusion to National Housing Trust Fund. On February 28, the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which oversees Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, announced the largest infusion yet of funding into the national Housing Trust Fund. HTF dollars are allocated by formula to states for the expansion, preservation, and operation of rental housing affordable predominantly to extremely low income households. HTF funding is based on a share of new business volume of these housing GSEs. As home prices have soared, so too has new business volume at Fannie and Freddie, resulting in the [\\$740 million allocation to the HTF](#). The HTF is an important source of financing for affordable rental housing. Learn more about the HTF, state allocations, and more [here](#).

Voting Rights and Access for Residents at HUD-Assisted Properties. HUD wants owners and management teams to know that residents have the right to access voter registration activities and to participate in the electoral process. In an email to owners and agents, HUD has asked they share voter and election resources with residents, including encouraging residents to visit [vote.gov](#). This website provides information, including how to register to vote, voter registration deadlines, and specific information about state and local elections. According to HUD, permissible activities at multifamily-assisted properties include the use of community space on an incidental basis to hold meetings, candidate forums, or voter registration, provided that all parties and organizations have access to the facility on an equal basis and are assessed equal rent or use charges; and, collaborating with local election administrators to permit the use of space for voter drop boxes and voting sites, including for early voting. Of course, owners/agents may not use Section 8, PRAC, or project funds to finance the use of facilities or equipment for partisan political purposes or partisan political activities that favor one candidate, party or political position over another. Any voter registration activities undertaken should not be partisan. Impermissible activities include any act that would suggest that benefits are in any way tied to a participant's voting activity, or give the appearance that the processes of voter registration or voting are not voluntary processes. HUD also reminds owners/agents that federal laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), require that the voting process, including voter registration, site selection, and casting ballots be accessible for individuals with disabilities. See [here](#) for additional information.

Biden Administration Releases New COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The White House released a new [National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan](#). It is focused on 4 key goals: 1) protect and treat against covid; 2)

prepare for new variants; 3) prevent economic and educational shutdowns; and 4) continue to vaccinate the world. Each of the four goals has a number of specific tactics, both for the Administration to execute on its own and for them to work with Congress to achieve.

HUD Resources and Webinar: Earned Income Tax Credit Information Now Available. New resources and information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is now available on the [HUD Exchange](#). The 2021 American Rescue Plan (ARP) expanded the EITC to include more workers without children as well as older workers (65+), temporarily raised the maximum credit for individuals without dependents from approximately \$540 to \$1,500, and increased the income cap to qualify for individuals without dependents from approximately \$16,000 to \$21,000. The EITC is not considered income, and receiving these tax credits will not impact anyone's eligibility for federal benefits. The federal government along with hundreds of nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, and members of Congress are engaged in an all-out push to make sure every eligible American receives the EITC by filing their taxes. With just over one month left until the tax filing deadline of April 18, join HUD, Treasury, and the White House on Wednesday, March 9, from 2 – 2:45pm ET for a [webinar](#) on the CTC and EITC. See LeadingAge's EITC toolkit [here](#).