



1. **CMS increases reimbursement rate for homebound vaccinations.** CMS announced that they are increasing the rate for providing the vaccine to those who administer the vaccine in home to those who are having trouble accessing the vaccine. LeadingAge has been engaged in advocacy around the critical need to provide vaccines in the home and community and are excited to see CMS respond with some additional financial support for those who are having trouble vaccinations from vaccine sites. An article on this new guidance can be found at: <https://leadingage.org/planning-paying/cms-increases-paymentrate-home-covid-vaccinations-1>

2. **OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard for Healthcare Settings.** Thursday afternoon the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health posted an emergency temporary standard for health care settings; it focuses on healthcare workers most likely to have contact with someone infected with COVID. It will be effective immediately upon publication in the Federal Register and employers will have to comply with most requirements within two weeks. [Here](#) is a brief summary of the provisions of the rule.

3. **Provider Relief Fund Update – key updates, more analysis to come next week.** HRSA released long awaited guidance on the provider relief fund reporting requirements on Friday afternoon. We will have much more on this next week, but here are some key updates:
 - The period of availability of funds is based on the date the payment is received (rather than requiring all payments be used by June 30, 2021, regardless of when they were received). Therefore, there are different deadlines for utilization and reporting of the funds will be based on when a provider received the PRF payment.
 - HRSA divided the “payment received period” into four periods with different deadlines to utilize the funds and different reporting requirements.
 - Recipients are required to report for each Payment Received Period in which they received one or more payments exceeding, in the aggregate, \$10,000 (rather than \$10,000 cumulatively across all PRF payments).
 - Those four periods, with their corresponding deadlines and reporting requirements are:

	Payment Received Period*	Deadline to Use Funds	Reporting Time Period
Period 1	April 10, 2020 to June 30, 2020	June 30, 2021	July 1 to September 30, 2021
Period 2	July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020	December 31, 2021	January 1 to March 31, 2022

Period 3	January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021	June 30, 2022	July 1 to September 30, 2022
Period 4	July 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021	December 31, 2022	January 1 to March 31, 2023

*Providers must report for each reporting period in which they received *payments exceeding \$10,000 in aggregate payment received.*

- Recipients will have a 90-day period to complete reporting (rather than a 30-day reporting period).
- The reporting requirements are now applicable to recipients of the Skilled Nursing Facility and Nursing Home Infection Control Distribution in addition to General and other Targeted Distributions.
- The PRF Reporting Portal will open for providers to start submitting information on July 1, 2021.

More information can be found [here](#)

4. **New Action Alert!** Congress is back to work and negotiations on the proposed infrastructure bill and funding for key programs is happening now. We need aging services advocates like you to demand funding for safe and affordable housing and home and community-based services for older adults. Tell Congress to fund our aging services infrastructure now! At a time when millions of older adults—a large proportion of them from marginalized communities—are facing hardships, it’s critical for Congress to take action by providing more support and resources. Tell your representatives in Congress that any infrastructure bill that goes forward must provide for safe and affordable housing designed specifically for older Americans, as well as home and community-based services by visiting <https://mobilize4change.org/H6bmCVJ>
5. **New Quickcast: End-of-Life Conversations with Chinese Older Adults.** [In this 9-minute QuickCast](#), Alicia Gomez and Mary Jer provide insight into how Boston Senior Home Care has normalized conversations about what matters most to Chinese elders at the end-of-life so that their wishes are fully understood and respected.
6. **Save the Date – June 24, 3:00 PM ET for a Medicaid Managed Care Issue Forum.** Many of the state execs and staff asked if we could host a forum similar to the one we had in late April on Medicare Advantage but this time on Medicaid Managed Care Issues. Nicole will send out an email in the next week that will include the Zoom link. In the meantime, please submit topics you would like to discuss, questions you would like answers to or other items to [Nicole](#) so we can make this a productive use of everyone’s time. We hope this time works for the majority of folks.

7. **LeadingAge submits comments on FY2022 Hospice Wage Index Rule.** Our comments focused on the proposed changes to the hospice quality reporting program and CMS’s analysis of recent hospice utilization data. The full comments can be found [here](#).

8. **Hospital and Healthcare Compensation Service (HCS) is has announced that they are currently conducting 2021-2022 Home Care and Hospice Salary and Benefits studies, now underway and invites LeadingAge members to participate.** The deadline for participation in this year’s study is August 2, 2021. The published results cover marketplace data for 60 jobs and 21 fringe benefits. The results cover job data by salary, hourly, and per visit rates with data breakouts by auspice, revenue size, region, state, and CBSA. Planned salary increases, turnover, caseload, and shift differential data are also covered.
Directions to Participate in the Home Care or Hospice Salary & Benefits Study
 - **Download the questionnaire from the HCS website:** <https://www.hhcsinc.com>
 - **Email Rosanne Zabka with HCS, RZabka@hhcsinc.com to confirm your planned participation.**
 - **Email your completed questionnaire to Rosanne by August 2nd.**Study participants save over 50% off the **Report** price. The pre-paid participant rate is \$185 (payment due by 8/31/2021); the billed participant rate is \$205. The standard report pricing for nonparticipants is \$375.

9. **CMS Announces Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE) Beta Test Recruitment:** CMS and their contractor, Abt Associates are now recruiting Medicare-certified hospice providers to participate in a beta test of the draft hospice patient assessment instrument called Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE). Recruitment ends June 14, 2021. Data collection is anticipated to begin in fall 2021. The detailed recruitment announcement and application for participation are available on CMS’s [Hospice QRP Provider and Stakeholder Engagement](#) webpage. Those interested in participating should complete the application and email to HospiceAssessment@CMS.hhs.gov by June 14, 2021.

10. **LeadingAge Supports New “Audio-Only” Telehealth Legislation Targeting Rural, Underserved Areas.** Today, Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), and Jerry Moran (R-KS) introduced the bipartisan *Protecting Rural Telehealth Access Act* to make current telehealth flexibilities under the Medicare program permanent, after the COVID-19 pandemic. LeadingAge is one of the 20 stakeholder organizations that support this bill. While it does not address the need for reimbursement for telehealth in home health nor permanent authority for hospice provider to provide services via telehealth, we were pleased to see the recognition of the importance of audio-only telehealth and look forward to working with these Senators on our other telehealth priorities.

This legislation would primarily ensure rural and underserved community healthcare providers are able to continue offering telehealth services after the current public health emergency ends. These services include the ability to offer audio-only telehealth appointments because many rural Americans don’t have reliable, affordable broadband access. Additionally, it would permanently waive the geographic restriction allowing patients to be treated in their homes, and lift the restrictions on “store and forward” technologies, and allow new telehealth services for critical access hospitals and rural health and federally qualified health clinics. Background

information on the *Protecting Rural Telehealth Access Act* can be [found here](#). Bill text can be [found here](#).

11. **Expanded Eldercare Locator Services Include Vaccine Appointments:** the Eldercare Locator, a service that is provided by the Administration for Community Living and the National Association for Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) now has the resources to help older adults to find vaccine appointments in their communities. If older adults or those who serve them need help connecting to potential ways to get vaccine in their community, they can call the Eldercare Locator for assistance! More information can be found [here](#).
12. **Committee on Education & Labor Examine DOL Priorities and Highlight the Release of the OSHA Workplace Rules.** The House Education and Labor Committee held a June 9, 2021, hearing titled, “Examining the Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).” Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh, the hearing witness, reflected on how the Biden Administration’s [American Jobs Plan](#) (AJP), the [American Families Plan](#) (AFP) and the President’s fiscal year (FY) 2022 federal budget impacts workforce development programs, and how as a nation, we should sufficiently invest in our workforce infrastructure. The hearing also provided Secretary Walsh with an opportunity to address the above-mentioned long-awaited workplace protections for COVID-19 from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. [Here](#) is an article about the hearing.
13. **ACL Webinar on Housing Plus Services.** The Administration on Community Living is offering a webinar, “What it Takes to Age in Place: Bringing Housing and Home and Community-Based Services Together,” on Thursday, June 17 from 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET. Speakers from the National Center on Law and Elder Rights will present information on the connection between housing and services and talk about how Medicaid funds HCBS. The webinar is free but [registration](#) is required.