



1. **Registration Open – HQRP – Understanding the Composite Quality Measure – Webinar and Materials Available from May 12th session on HOPE tool.** CMS is hosting a webinar on understanding the composite quality measure on Wednesday, June 2, from 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET. Spaces are limited so please only register if you can attend live; otherwise sign up for the list to receive notification of when the recording will be available. Click [here](#) to register for the HQRP webinar. If you would like to be notified by email when the recording of the webinar is available, click [here](#). Materials are available from the May 12th session on the HOPE tool [here](#).
2. **Home Health Emergency Access to Telehealth (HEAT) Act Reintroduced in Congress** – Reps. Jodey Arrington (R-TX), Terri Sewell (D-AL), Mike Kelly (R-PA), and Mike Thompson (D-CA) reintroduced the HEAT Act, a [bipartisan bill](#) to provide Medicare reimbursement for audio and video telehealth services furnished by home health agencies during the COVID-19 emergency and future public health emergencies. U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Roger Marshall (R-KS), and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) introduced companion legislation in the Senate last month.
3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **Meeting with HRSA on Provider Relief.** LeadingAge met with HRSA leadership today to discuss our members' needs for continued PRF funding and to find out more on the status of future funds, timing of reporting requirements and customer service. The overarching response was that HRSA is taking a very measured approach in the hopes of providing clear information and processes. HRSA is trying to balance all interests as they roll out the remaining application process and reporting, such as, providers need for funding, oversight and stewardship of the available funds, Congressional direction. Translation: they are not yet ready to open a new application portal yet or the reporting portal and deadlines.

They did note that Congress has provided direction on the use of PRF dollars and HRSA is trying to determine how to meet Congress' intent, while being equitable and transparent. We knew that Congress had instructed HHS to distribute 85% of the remaining funds to providers based upon needs from the last half of 2020 and first quarter of 2021 but did not recall the language specifying the CARES Act dollars (which was the original \$100B appropriation). This is causing some complications as HRSA tries to determine how much of the remaining funds are CARES Act dollars vs. funds appropriated under subsequent legislation. HRSA acknowledges that there is not much left but wants to make sure that the remaining funds get where they are most needed.

As these details are worked out, they will be releasing more information soon on the next application round, reporting requirements and timelines. HRSA also has been working to bolster its customer service support and said they are committed to helping providers through the reporting process once it is open. HRSA appeared very willing to work through issues with us to ensure that our members receive funds they need.

We also raised two issues members have been having -- getting TINs validated and getting OptumPay accounts set up to receive funds. If members are having either of these issues, they should email Nicole (nfallon@leadingage.org) as soon as possible.

6. **Upcoming 3:30 Update Calls. Using everything we learned during COVID and helping staff and residents/consumers live their best lives.** Join our Coronavirus Update Calls next week on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday! All calls are at 3:30 PM ET. On **Monday, June 7, we'll talk with Terry Spitznagel**, Chief Growth Officer for United Church Homes, about their experiences with providing housing plus services...and opportunities to expand from lessons learned from the pandemic. **On Wednesday, June 9, Tyler Vanderweele**, founder and leader of the Human Flourishing Program at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health will be with us to talk about lessons from his Center's research on using activity to make lives better. How do these lessons apply to post pandemic consumers and staff, not to mention leaders of aging services organizations. Tyler has worked on end of life issues and will discuss that research too. If you haven't signed up yet, you can join the call by [registering here](#).
7. **Reps. Axne, Schakowsky, and McKinley Unveiled the Americans Giving Care to Elders (AGE) Act** -- On June 3, Rep. Cindy Axne (IA-03), Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-09), and Rep. David McKinley (WV-01) unveiled [bipartisan legislation](#) that supports Americans who are caring for their older family members by offering tax credits to cover costs of elder care. Approximately one-third of caregivers leave the workforce entirely to provide care for someone in their life. The legislation could help offset expenses related to facilitating care in the home.

8. **Updates to CDC guidance:** CDC updated 2 pieces of guidance Wednesday – [Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions](#) and [Return to Work Criteria for Healthcare Personnel](#). The major recommendations continues to be utilizing a symptom-based strategy (or time-based for asymptomatic cases) for determining when to discontinue transmission-based precautions or allow healthcare personnel to return to work. However, if you choose to use a test-based strategy (for example, you are concerned that someone might still be infectious beyond 20 days), here's what you need:
- It has been more than 24 hours since the last fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication.
 - Symptoms have improved.
 - 2 consecutive negative nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) spaced at least 24 hours apart

The guidance also provides more information on who might be severely immunocompromised, adding to this category individuals who have received hematopoietic stem cell or solid organ transplants, individuals on immunosuppressive drugs to suppress rejection of transplanted organs or to treat rheumatologic conditions, and those who are on prednisone at >20 mg/day for more than 14 days.

9. **Interim Final Rule on COVID-19 Vaccine Education, Offering, Reporting:** Comments are due July 12, 2021 to the federal register. LeadingAge will be submitting comments and we encourage individual providers to do so as well. We are in the process of developing a resource to assist members in formulating and submitting comments.
10. **New Convergence reports.** Following a set of brainstorming meetings on rethinking care for older adults, the Convergence Project issued this [final report](#), summarizing the conversations and describing reform ideas that emerged from them. Last week, the Project issued a menu of ideas to [supplement](#) the original report. The supplement provides a series of short papers that identify administrative steps that could yield change, along with background information and links for additional reading. Subjects range from ideas to promote and support aging at home to workforce solutions to technology ideas. They make a great crash course in aging policy issues!
11. **Join Us Next Week: Collaborative Care & Health IT Innovations Summit.** We all know how important it is for long-term and acute care providers to stay current with the very latest technology and innovations that can improve care, reduce costs, and lead to better health outcomes for older adults. After a year of struggling with COVID, many of you have shared that your budgets just won't allow you to attend this year's Collaborative Care & Health IT Innovations Summit. That's why LeadingAge is opening up the June 8-10 event by offering [free registration to all care providers](#) across the collaborative care continuum.
12. **State by State Face Mask Mandates.** The latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) allows people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to forgo masks in most public settings, indoors and out. Several States have modified their masks mandates to align with the federal guidelines while others have relaxed rules in most settings. *Fifteen* state governments require people to wear face coverings in most indoor public settings to curb the spread of COVID-19. The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico also have mask orders in place. To

date, 24 states that had mask orders covering the general public have mostly lifted them. *Eleven* states did not impose mask mandates at any point during the pandemic. [Here is where each state stands](#) on the use of face masks, as of June 2, 2021.

From HHS:

Vaccination Certificates: A vaccination certificate is [created in VAMS after a healthcare professional logs a COVID-19 vaccine dose for a recipient in VAMS](#). The certificate will include information about the date(s) of vaccine administration and second-dose due date (if applicable), vaccine manufacturer, lot number, and clinic name. After the recipient receives the required number of vaccine dose(s) to complete the vaccination schedule, the certificate can serve as a recipient's vaccination record documented in VAMS. Recipients can access their vaccination certificate in the Recipient Portal at any time. CDC added the following information pages in regard to VAMS: [Multi-Factor Authentication \(MFA\) in VAMS](#), [VAMS Inventory Management](#), [VAMS Clinic Schedule Setup](#), [Flexible Registration](#), [Email Notifications from VAMS](#), [Standard Workflow to Document Vaccinations](#), [Clinic Types in VAMS](#), [VAMS Clinic Schedule Setup](#), [Clinic Data Reports Clinic Administrator](#), [Clinic Appointment Reservation Tiers](#), [Third-Party Clinic Operations in VAMS](#), [User Access Troubleshooting Tips](#), and [Access Jurisdiction Data Reporting Dashboards](#).

COVID-19 Data Tracker Updates: CDC added new information to their COVID-19 data tracker. CDC [updated the healthcare personnel tab](#) to now show trends in cases and deaths among healthcare personnel by week. CDC also [updated the daily and total trends tab with a new time slider](#), which allows for the narrowing of date ranges in the display to focus and zoom the trends lines and bars in on smaller periods of time.

State by State COVID-19 Vaccine Incentives: The National Governors [Association updated their information on COVID-19 vaccine incentives](#) used by each state. This memo includes information on state- and city-led incentives.

Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People: CDC [updated their guidance for fully vaccinated people](#). The updated guidance includes an updated "Choosing Safer Activities" infographic with new considerations for the example activity for outdoor gatherings with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

Types of Masks: CDC [updated their guidance for unvaccinated people on the types of masks](#). There are many types of masks you can use to protect yourself and others from getting and spreading COVID-19. When choosing a mask, choose one that fits snugly. The CDC outlines the uses of cloth masks, disposable masks, and masks that meet a standard. CDC recommends that N95 respirators should be prioritized for protection against COVID-19 in healthcare settings. Essential workers and workers who routinely wore respirators before the pandemic should continue wearing N95 respirators. As N95s become available they can be worn in non-healthcare settings.