

Highlights for LPCs:

LeadingAge Staffing Survey: Better Pay, Vaccine Avoidance, and Temporary Staffing Agencies are Top Concerns. Staffing concerns are front and center in the daily lives of aging services providers, according to a LeadingAge pulse survey conducted in the last week of September. Using an opportunity sample, the survey helps to illustrate what the workforce crisis looks like on the ground for LeadingAge members, on a variety of issues. The survey results are also useful in our advocacy with members of Congress and the Administration, particularly since the Congressional Infrastructure Package includes billions of dollars to address the aging services national workforce crisis. You can access an [article here](#) that provides an overview of the responses. An abridged version of the Staffing Survey can be accessed [here](#).

A Heads Up on Sign Language Interpretation. An [article](#) came out this week that's important to note: a collection of senior living providers in Michigan recently were served civil rights accommodation lawsuits for not providing sign language interpreters for deaf and/or hard of hearing residents. The Fair Housing Center for Metropolitan Detroit sent in "secret shoppers" to test whether interpreters would be provided to "prospective" family members; allegedly, the "secret shoppers" were told that they'd have to pay for their own interpreters or use written notes to communicate. "Those denials, the lawsuits allege, violate the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, the Affordable Care Act, and Michigan's Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act." Similar lawsuits earlier this year and in 2018 resulted in settlements levied to the organizations at nearly a quarter-million dollars.

LeadingAge Releases Booster Shot Toolkit for Long-Term Care Settings. With the Pfizer booster vaccine ready for rollout to long-term care residents and staff, LeadingAge has published a toolkit to help assisted living, affordable senior housing, life plan communities, and home- and community-based services organizations increase vaccine access. The toolkit covers four main topics, including resources for on- and off-site vaccine support, federal agency resources, and resources to get connected to vaccine-administering pharmacies. The toolkit includes compiled information on transit reimbursements for residents seeking vaccines in the broader community, educational materials from the CDC about getting vaccinated, and sample letters and surveys to get help communities get vaccine clinics set up. Some materials are available in English and Spanish, and LeadingAge has urged the CDC to make more translated materials available. LeadingAge will update the toolkit as more booster shots become available for more people. The toolkit is available [here](#).

COVID-19 Related Updates:

Guidance on HIPAA and COVID-19 vaccination status disclosure. Since the release of vaccines last winter, we have heard concern about confirming vaccination status of employees, contractors, and visitors in different settings. In particular, we have heard concerns from nursing home members who are required to report vaccination status of any individuals providing care

in the nursing home or are recommended to inquire about the vaccination status of visitors to the nursing home. HHS has released guidance to clarify when and why requesting disclosure of COVID-19 vaccination status is NOT a HIPAA violation. Check out this guidance [here](#). We note that this guidance applies only to the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

\$500M in American Rescue Plan(ARP) Fund Available for Rural Healthcare, Applications due October 12. In the middle of August, the Administration announced not only vaccine mandates for health care on the horizon but also this opportunity for funding for rural American in the Federal Register [announcement](#) of the availability of \$500M in COVID-19 ARP funds available for rural health care.

Updated Guidance on Federal Workforce Vaccine Mandate. The Safer Federal Workplace Task Force updated their [Vaccination FAQs](#) with guidance on how the federal government will address vaccinations within its workforce and provided some hints on the process it will follow for requests for exemptions to the vaccine mandate. The guidance also included templates for requesting a [medical](#) or [religious](#) exemption that federal agencies can utilize. These templates are helpful to see how the government will handle such exemption requests and we will monitor to see how these are consistent with whatever guidance that CMS issues regarding the vaccine mandate for Medicare and Medicaid providers.

Updated: Vaccine Mandates & Bans by State. We have updated the [Vaccine Mandates by State: Who Is, Who Isn't, and How?](#) article to include one additional state (Wisconsin) as well as new information we are tracking on states that are planning to pursue legal action against the Biden Administration over the Path Out of the Pandemic Plan. Click on the link provided to read more.

LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Call. It's not a news flash that workforce shortages are the number one issue for members across the country. Keeping current staff is also a key issue for all members. Tune in to the Update Call on **Monday, October 11 at 3:30 PM ET** to hear from LeadingAge National Board Member **Christie Hinrichs** as she discusses her organization's workforce strategies and specifically how they have utilized **WeCareConnect** to help with employee engagement and retention. On **Wednesday's** call, we will be joined by **Christian Living Communities COO Jayne Keller** as she talks about her organization's CNA mentorship program, Drive Culture webinars, and employee benefits to keep employees satisfied and motivated to work for this member community. If you haven't registered for LeadingAge Update Calls, [you can do so here](#).

FROM HHS:

- 1. Vaccination Linked to a Reduction of Over a Quarter Million COVID-19 Cases, 100,000 Hospitalizations, and 39,000 Deaths Among Seniors:** A new report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [shows that COVID-19 vaccinations may have helped prevent hundreds of thousands of new COVID-19 infections and tens of thousands of deaths](#) among seniors. The study, which was conducted by researchers with HHS's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), found that vaccinations were linked to a reduction of approximately 265,000 COVID-19 infections, 107,000 hospitalizations, and 39,000 deaths among Medicare beneficiaries between January and May 2021.
- 2. Eligibility for a COVID-19 Booster Shot:** CDC [updated the "Who is Eligible for a COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shot?" page](#). Specifically, CDC provided additional information on the

difference between a booster shot and an additional dose. A booster shot is administered when a person has completed their vaccine series and protection against the virus has decreased over time. Additional doses are administered to people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems. This additional dose of an mRNA-COVID-19 vaccine is intended to improve [immunocompromised people's](#) response to their initial vaccine series.

- 3. COVID-19 Vaccine Information:** CDC [updated their key things to know about COVID-19 vaccines](#) to include additional information on eligibility, effectiveness, safety, population immunity, and variants. CDC also [updated their information for older adults](#) on the COVID-19 vaccine to include additional information on booster shots. The update also emphasized that the vaccines cannot make you sick with COVID-19.
- 4. Most Vaccine-Hesitant People Remain Willing to Change Their Minds:** NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins [discussed a new study published in JAMA Network Open](#) that tracked vaccine hesitancy over time in a random sample of more than 4,600 Americans. This national study shows that vaccine hesitancy isn't set in stone. Over the course of this pandemic, hesitancy has decreased, and many who initially said no are now getting their shots. Many others who remain unvaccinated lean toward making an appointment. The survey's initial results showed that nearly 70 percent of respondents were willing to get vaccinated at the outset, with the other 30 percent expressing some hesitancy. Among the nearly 3,500 individuals who answered the survey at follow-up, about a third who were initially vaccine hesitant already had received at least one shot. Another third also said that they'd now be willing to get the vaccine, even though they hadn't just yet. Among those who initially expressed a willingness to get vaccinated, about half had done so at follow up by spring 2021 (again, some still may not have been eligible). Forty percent said they were likely to get vaccinated. However, 7 percent of those who were initially willing said they were now less likely to get vaccinated than before.

Advocacy Alerts and Hill News:

Build Back Better Reconciliation Action Alert. Please continue to share our action alert with your members. We have had over 1,000 advocates take action and we need to keep up the pressure Here is link and message to share: Now is the time to act: send a message to your U.S. Representative and Senators today! LINK: <https://mobilize4change.org/Rv4BBTh>

The Congressional Infrastructure Package Must Include Older Adults

House committees have passed bills that make significant investments to support older adults and LeadingAge members. The next step is to bring these committee bills to the House floor as one \$3.5 trillion package. NOW is the moment to ensure programs and resources are not cut as the process moves forward!

LeadingAge Warns Congress Not to Renege on Affordable Housing Commitments for Older Adults. Responding to reports that Congressional negotiators are considering removing all \$322 billion of affordable housing funding from the Build Back Better Act, LeadingAge issued a press release today lambasting the idea. "Older Americans are not disposable bargaining chips. They are our relatives, friends and neighbors who will suffer every day and night without a place to call home," LeadingAge President & CEO Katie Smith Sloan said in the statement. On October 6, every Democratic member of the House Committee on Financial Services, led by Chairwoman Maxine Waters (D-CA), sent a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi urging the housing funding

remain in the package. “As members of the House Financial Services Committee, we can affirm that a comprehensive approach to infrastructure includes a robust investment in our nation’s affordable housing stock and that a comprehensive approach to our social safety net includes investment in affordable housing,” the [letter](#) said. LeadingAge members are [urged](#) to reach out to their members of Congress and urge protection of the Build Back Better Act’s housing funding, including the bill’s \$2.4 billion for more than 37,500 new Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Homes, new Service Coordinators to help Section 202 residents age in community, and technical assistance to help states direct health services resources to affordable senior housing communities. The October 7 LeadingAge press release also pointed to a new HUD report showing that the number of [older adults with “worst case needs”](#)—very low income older adults who pay more than half their incomes for rent, and/or live in housing with serious repair issues -- increased by 82% during the last decade.

News from LeadingAge:

2022 Annual Meeting Call for Sessions. Have a great idea for a session that should be part of next year’s LeadingAge Annual Meeting + EXPO, happening October 16-19 in Denver, CO? You can begin submitting proposals now! Learn more, get answers to common questions, and [complete your submission here](#).

LeadingAge Member Stories: Putting Out a Red Carpet to Recruit New Employees. [Our latest member story](#) describes how one multi-site member has adapted resident marketing principles to its staff hiring process—focusing on what potential employees need and want out of a job. LeadingAge also wants to hear your stories of practical workforce innovations; the [LeadingAge Story Collector](#), powered by Greystone, makes it easy. Submissions don’t have to be perfect; LeadingAge staff will contact you to gather more details!

Thinking About Strategic Planning? You Need These Resources. Those of us who work in the aging services sector know there's never been a more important time to bolster our organization’s strength. That’s why LeadingAge designed these [Governance Resources for Aging Services](#) to help address the unique challenges and opportunities our members face. [Get started on your organization’s governance strategy today](#).