

LPC Weekly Report

Friday, June 17 2022



**Highlights for LPCs:**

**Get the funding information you need! Navigating the Employee Retention Credit.** On June 22 at 2:00 PM ET, the LeadingAge Learning Hub will offer a webinar focused on the nuances of the Employee Retention Credit for aging services providers, including processes and eligibility requirements. The IRS Employee Retention Credit (ERC) is a COVID-era alternate source funding opportunity that thus far has received scant attention but could have big implications for aging services providers. LeadingAge members who are eligible may be in a position to receive substantial funds. Navigating the IRS claims and funds retention processes are not without risk of audit. Learn everything you need to maximize funds and protect your organization in the case of an audit. More information and registration details are [here](#).

**LPC Member Network Call:** Join us for the next LPC Member Network call on Tuesday, June 28 at 11:00 AM ET\*. This month's discussion is on the evolution of hospitality in the LPC, and will host a great panel including Jill Vitale-Aussem, President and CEO, Christian Living Communities, Justin Spooner, Senior Vice President, Greystone, and Julie Fenske, Regional Director, Greystone. \*Please note the date and time change for this month only. To join, email Dee at [dpekruhn@leadingage.org](mailto:dpekruhn@leadingage.org).

**More Phase 4 Payments Being Distributed:** HRSA announced that it is sending out the latest batch of Phase 4 Provider Relief Fund (PRF) payments (\$427M) to 1,400 providers. This latest distribution brings the total of Phase 4 payments made to date to \$14.3B of the available \$17B. Providers will receive an email notification if they are one of the providers scheduled to receive a payment. LeadingAge would recommend, however, all providers still awaiting a Phase 4 payment check their bank accounts over the next few days to see if a new payment has arrived from HHS/HRSA. In our experience, providers do not always receive the email notifications from HRSA in a timely manner. Given the announcement timing, we would expect the payments to arrive today or tomorrow as Monday is a national holiday. This will not be the final batch of payments and HRSA said that it is, "working to process all remaining applications as quickly as possible." HRSA's pattern has been to send out a batch of payments around the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month and if that continues, we should expect the next round of payments around the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. Due to the continuing nature of these Phase 4 payments, we expect an additional reporting period to be added. Finally, a reminder that a number of providers have already been approved for Phase 4 payments and HRSA is unable to distribute them because the provider has not yet established an OptumPay account, which allows HRSA to transmit payments in excess of \$100, 000 via ACH. More information on this process is available in this [LeadingAge article](#)

**COVID-19 Related Updates:**

**CDC Webinar on "Up to Date" Definition Change.** The CDC Vaccination Team will be hosting a webinar next week to inform facilities about the Up to Date surveillance definition change for COVID-19 Vaccination Modules. We will review the new Up to Date definition, example scenarios, and frequently asked questions. Registration information is here: [https://cdc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_37CqiJsiSGCOnreh6l6Rw](https://cdc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_37CqiJsiSGCOnreh6l6Rw)

**Surveys for Compliance with Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Requirements.** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) posted memo [QSO-22-17-ALL](#) containing new instructions for surveys for compliance with Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination Requirements. CMS previously issued guidance and survey procedures to survey entities for assessing and maintaining compliance with the regulatory requirements for vaccination requiring review as part of initial certification, standard recertification or reaccreditation, and complain surveys. The new guidance changes expectations for performing compliances reviews of the staff vaccination requirements to during initial, recertification, and responded to specific complaint allegations alleging non-compliances with staff vaccination requirements. CMS also notes that survey agencies should reach out to CMS locations if they are considering citing vaccine requiremetns at immediate jeopardy, condition, or actual harm levels. These changes come after survey results from over 12,000 providers and suppliers showed a 95% substantial compliance rate.

**COVID Treatment Public Information.** The Medicare Team at CMS shared public information today, urging consumers to act quickly to test for COVID-19 when they have symptoms and quickly seek therapeutics if they do test positive. Given the confusion about Paxlovid among consumers and the general public, this information may be helpful for LeadingAge members to share with residents, tenants, consumers, patients and staff. The CMS announcement includes a link to this [CDC resource](#). It was updated at the end of April, however many individuals do not know about it.

#### ***Advocacy Updates and Hill News:***

**Rep. Schakowsky Leads Efforts to Strengthen Funding to Support Health Care Professionals Who Care for Older Adults.** House appropriators are scheduled to vote on the Labor-HHS fiscal year 2023 appropriations bill this month. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Senior Chief Deputy Whip and Chair of the House Democratic Caucus on Aging and Families, has spearhead a House sign-on letter championing increased funding for programs that support health care professionals who care for older adults. To that end, advocates should watch for a LeadingAge action alert the week of June 20 on funding for workforce programs in the Labor-HHS bill. You can view an article [here](#), which provides access to the letter, co-signed by 29 Members of Congress, and the initiatives that should be prioritized through the FY 2023 appropriations process.

**IRS Increases Standard Mileage Rate in Final Months of 2022.** To support taxpayers with the cost of gas, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has increased the standard mileage reimbursement rate halfway through the year for the first time since 2011. Read this [article](#) for what members need to know about the changes.

**HIPAA guidance on audio only telehealth services:** HHS issued guidance this week to help providers utilizing audio-only telehealth services to navigate HIPAA compliance. An article on the topic can be found [here](#).

**LeadingAge Meeting with DOL to Address Prevailing Wage Determinations for Foreign Nurses and National Apprenticeships.** On June 13, 2022, LeadingAge staff and representatives from AHCA/NCAL met with leaders from the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training (ETA) and the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (OCIA). We asked DOL to change the time it takes to handle “Schedule A” petitions, which would alleviate pressures in the process of allowing registered nurses to permanently enter the country. LeadingAge members, Paul Spence, United Methodist Healthcare Recruitment and Tina Sandri, Forrest Hills of DC, also participated in the meeting. [Here](#) is an article with more details about this meeting.

**LeadingAge sends letter of support on Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care:** LeadingAge along with ASHA, Argentum, and NCAL sent a letter to Senators Tester (D-MT), Moran (R-KS) and Murray (D-WA) in support of S. 4169, a bill this trio of Senators introduced last month. Senators Tester and Moran are the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. This bill creates a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of providing eligible veterans with the option to move into an assisted living community for their supportive care services. The letter can be found [here](#).

**IRS Acts on Cost of Gasoline.** For the first time ever, a gallon of regular gas now costs \$5 on average nationwide, according to AAA. Increasing gas prices have hit home and community-based providers particularly hard on the staffing side given the nature of the job which might require an employee to visit multiple clients a day using their own personal vehicle. Last week the IRS [attempted](#) to alleviate some of those pressures by announcing an increase in the optional standard mileage rate for the final six months of 2022. Taxpayers can use the optional standard mileage rates to calculate the deductible costs of operating a vehicle for business purposes. For the final six months of 2022, the standard mileage rate will be 62.5 cents - that's a 4-cent increase from the start of the year. This new rate will be effective July 1, 2022. One important caveat, the 14 cents per mile rate for charitable organizations remains unchanged as it's set in federal statute.

**HAPF Policy Briefing.** The Health and Aging Policy Fellows program funds a cohort of approximately 20 mid-career professionals who work in aging and/or health care to spend a year working in Washington, DC with policymakers. The 2021-22 fellows will talk about their work during their fellowships, covering issues related to nursing homes, advance care planning and oral health, at the HAPF Symposium, "Aging Policy: What's New, What's Next, What's Possible?" The free, virtual session is set for Friday, June 17 from 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM ET. You can register [here](#).

### **News from LeadingAge:**

#### **LeadingAge Awarded Grant to Advance Nursing Home Improvements and Reform**

The John A. Hartford Foundation awarded a \$1 million grant to LeadingAge to implement strategies to improve nursing home care in America. The grant aims to put recommendations into action from the recently released NASEM report [The National Imperative to Improve Nursing Home Quality: Honoring Our Commitment to Residents, Families, and Staff](#). [Read the press release](#) to learn more about this grant, and read recent press coverage from [Skilled Nursing News](#) and [InsideHealthPolicy](#). Check out these recently released issue briefs summarizing the report's recommendations on financing, quality assurance, and workforce:

- [Creating a More Rational and Robust Financing System](#)
- [Designing a More Effective and Responsive System of Quality Assurance](#)
- [Ensuring a Well-Prepared, Empowered, and Appropriately Compensated Workforce](#)

**Apply Now: 2023 Leadership Academy.** The last several years have changed aging services organizations in ways that are still being revealed. What is clear? The need for diverse, empowered leaders within our field has never been greater. LeadingAge's Leadership Academy helps develop the leadership capacities and core competencies of aging services professionals by tapping into their natural talents and authentic leadership styles. Apply yourself or recommend the opportunity to a colleague. **Application Deadline: August 1.** [Learn more here](#).

**Live Webinar - Telehealth in Practice: Driving Efficiencies and Improving Outcomes.** Telehealth use has seen a significant increase among care providers, including LeadingAge members and other long-term and post-acute care (LTPAC) providers. Join us for a webinar on Thursday, July 21 from 2:00-3:30 p.m. ET, that will feature two provider use cases, one in a skilled nursing community and one in home care. [Learn more and register here](#).

