



PACE Organization Update

March 8, 2021

Update on American Rescue Plan. Over the weekend, the Senate passed the American Rescue Plan package by a vote of 50-49. **The federal increase for Medicaid HCBS (which includes PACE) made it into the final bill.** For a one year period beginning April 1, the federal share of Medicaid HCBS will increase by **ten** percentage points- up from 7.35 points in the House bill. This will represent more than \$10 billion in HCBS-specific funding that states have to use for services. We expect another House vote this week, soon followed by the President signing it into law. From there, the next step will be to work with state agencies to ensure that PACE organizations are included as funds go from states to providers.

The extension of the sequester moratorium is not included in the American Rescue Plan. As we understand it, the reconciliation process does not procedurally allow for an extension of the Medicare 2% sequester suspension. The sequester suspension is set to expire on March 31 and will require separate action by Congress, which we are advocating for. The 2% cut (and the suspension of that cut) applies to all Medicare billers, including PACE organizations.

CDC Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People: On March 8, [CDC issued guidance](#) for fully vaccinated people advising on which activities this group can partake in and which precautions no longer need to be followed. Fully vaccinated people are advised that they can do the following:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing
- Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic

The guidance does not apply to health care settings, including centers like PACE day centers and similar locations. We await further guidance specific to health care settings from CDC and/or CMS.

PACE Telehealth Legislation. In the last Congress, a bipartisan House coalition introduced legislation to extend coverage of audio-only telehealth visits to PACE organizations for the purpose of risk adjustment for 2020 and 2021. The bill did not get a vote. This Congress, the same bill was introduced in the [Senate](#), led by Sens. Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Scott (R-SC) and we believe a House companion will be introduced soon. This legislative fix to the [CMS memo](#) limiting risk adjustment submissions to audio **and video** visits continues to be a priority for LeadingAge and we will work to build support in both chambers. If you want to be part of our advocacy on this, please let Brendan (bflinn@leadingage.org) know.

Save The Date: 2021 LeadingAge Lobby Day: Calling all members! Be part of our 2021 Lobby Day, happening virtually on April 21. It's your chance to meet with elected officials and advocate for issues that are important to aging services. We'll share more information and registration information soon.

Ways and Means Announces Racial Equity Initiative: On March 5, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard E. Neal (D-MA) announced the creation of the Committee's Racial Equity Initiative (REI) and appointed Rep. Terri Sewell (D-AL), Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA), and Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV) to lead the working group. The REI represents the next phase of the Committee's work to address

the role of racism and other forms of discrimination in perpetuating health and economic inequalities in the United States. The creation of the REI follows a report, "[Something Must Change: Inequities in U.S. Policy and Society](#)," and framework, "[A Bold Vision for a Legislative Pathway Toward Health and Economic Equity](#)," that the Committee put out earlier this year highlighting the policy proposals and the pillars the Committee will focus on as it works to advance equity in this Congress and beyond. The full press release can be found [here](#).

New vaccine hesitancy report from the behavioral sciences: A panel of behavioral scientists produced a report to support CMS work on helping people who work in long-term care settings accept vaccines and overcome hesitancy. "[COVID-19 Vaccination Uptake Behavioral Science Task Force Final Report](#)" summarizes the insights and recommendations of the panel. Vaccine hesitancy according to the report is an attitude, not a behavior. The experts divided the adult population in the US into fifths, with one fifth fully welcoming vaccines, one fifth refusing, and the other three fifths in the "moveable middle." They reviewed all the recommendations and their potential use with each group.

CMMI Models on Pause: Both the Direct Contracting Geographic Model and the Primary Care First – Serious Illness Population (SIP) track are under review by CMMI and on pause for now. SIP was slated to start on April 1st and will not; no other information has yet been provided.

Reminder on LeadingAge Member Call Ins: LeadingAge hosts a COVID-19 update call series for members on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 3:30 PM EST. Every call includes an update on home and community-based services, updates for other provider types, and interviews with key experts (e.g., CDC officials, academics, providers) to share out real-time insights to our members. The calls generally run for one hour and recordings are on our website. Register here: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2218416852977539339>

Update archive

February 26: https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20update%202.26.21_0.pdf

February 19: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20update%202.19.21.pdf>

February 5: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20update%202.4.21.pdf>