

PACE Organization Update  
February 26, 2021



Please contact Brendan Flinn ([bflinn@leadingage.org](mailto:bflinn@leadingage.org)) with questions or comments.

**COVID-19 Vaccine Town Hall For Frontline Care Workers - Thursday, March 4 -- 7:00-8:30 p.m. Eastern:** LeadingAge, in partnership with the [Black Coalition Against COVID](#) (BCAC), is sponsoring a national town hall with the aging services community to address concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine, particularly among direct care workers. The agenda will feature senior leadership from the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Historically Black Colleges and Universities' medical schools, the National Black Nurses Association, and a variety of nationally recognized experts. **This town hall is open to anyone regardless of background or position in providing care.** This national town hall will be broadcast by [blackdoctor.org](#) through its [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube](#) streaming services. Please mark your calendars for Thursday, March 4 -- 7:00-8:30 p.m. ET to take part in this important discussion. For more information, email [Joe Franco](#).

**COVID-19 Relief Update:** The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the American Rescue Plan as early as today (2/26) or this weekend. LeadingAge [published an article](#) this week summarizing provisions in the bill that could provide funding and/or partnership opportunities for PACE organizations and other providers of home and community-based care. In other relief legislation news, the Senate Parliamentarian ruled that a minimum wage increase cannot pass through the Senate via reconciliation. Some Senators are proposing alternative ways to increase wages, including a mix of tax penalties and/or tax breaks, but it is unclear whether these ideas will be included in the Senate bill. In any case, as attention turns to the Senate and its consideration of COVID-19 relief, we will continue to push for dedicated funding for home and community-based including PACE organizations.

**Vaccine Distribution Update:** On 2/26, CDC held a listening session focused on connecting older adults to the COVID-19 vaccine. During this event, LeadingAge highlighted the importance of providing community-based providers like PACE organizations (and others) access to the vaccine, including through on-site clinics through the [Retail Pharmacy Program](#). While CDC has not issued guidance or information for how organizations like PACE can arrange vaccine clinics, providers can work directly with [participating pharmacies](#) and/or their state/local health department to secure vaccine for their participants and/or staff. We are working on ways to help facilitate these connections and will share updates as we have them. Separately, CDC issued guidance for jurisdictions on ensuring opportunity for older adults to get vaccinated (see next).

**Guidance for Jurisdictions on Equitable Access.** This week the CDC issued guidance for jurisdictions (e.g., states, localities) to ensure equal opportunities for vaccination of older adults and people with disabilities. The guidance recommends that jurisdictions consider collaborating with partners who may already work with older adults and people with disabilities, specify how older adults and people with disabilities and their care providers are considered in jurisdictional vaccination plans, and consider which vaccination providers can offer vaccines at locations more convenient for older adults and people with disabilities. It also includes information on outreach and physical accessibility. The guidance is [here](#). While PACE organizations are not mentioned by name, the guidance can certainly be used to advocate to state/local policymakers for in-house clinics for PACE, as PACE clearly fits within what the guidance advises.

**Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Update:** The FDA vaccine advisory group voted unanimously today (2/26) in favor of approving the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine. On Sunday (2/28), the CDC vaccine advisory group is expected to do same. Once approved by the CDC panel, the CDC director will officially grant an emergency use authorization (EUA), at which point the vaccine can be administered. Johnson & Johnson indicated that it can ship 3-4 million doses this week, and 20 million this month. The vaccine is a single dose. Here is the CDC meeting [agenda](#) and [live stream link](#). Here is the [main page](#) for the FDA meeting.

**HHS Nominee Confirmation Hearing and Nominations News:** Secretary-Designate Xavier Becerra had confirmation hearings in both the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) committee and the Senate Finance Committee this week. Of interest to PACE organizations, Becerra signaled strong support for virtual care continuing after the pandemic, improvements to home and community-based services, and a focus on health equity. He also expressed support for engaging on pilots to expand access to end of life and advanced illness care. No additional major HHS appointments were announced this week.

**Vaccinating homebound individuals:** LeadingAge participated in a meeting this week convened by the Trust for America's Health (TFAH), aimed at building partnerships to work on getting vaccines into the arms of people who are homebound. Bechara Couchair, White House Senior Coordinator on COVID vaccines, spoke at the meeting, emphasizing the Administration's commitment that "no older person will be left behind." Approximately 20% of adults over age 65 are homebound, by one definition discussed at the meeting. Dr. Couchair spoke at length about the WH commitment to equity in vaccine distribution. Providers, public health system representatives, aging network experts, and individuals from other key associations participated.

**Updates from this week's LeadingAge Member Call Ins:** Dr. Monica Gandhi from the University of California, San Francisco, joined the Coronavirus Update call. She believes that as the percentage of the population that is vaccinated grows, we will reach herd immunity and be able to lift many, many precautions – maybe by September. Read more of her insights [here](#). Dr. Rebecca Edelmayer from the Alzheimer's Association joined the call to discuss the findings of a recent study exploring the relationships between dementia and COVID-19 risks, hospitalizations, deaths and disparities. An article summarizing the interview can be found [here](#).

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

February 4: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20update%202.4.21.pdf>