

## PACE Organization Update March 12, 2021



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

**American Rescue Plan:** The main news item this week, and in this update, is the enactment of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). President Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion package on March 11. As described in some of the prior updates, there are many provisions here that apply to PACE organizations. Namely, the 10-point increase in the federal share of all Medicaid HCBS (including PACE) which begins on April 1. In addition, about \$360 billion will go to states and localities, and there may be opportunity to either access to PACE and/or direct financial assistance to PACE organizations and/or workers through these dollars. Some links:

- American Rescue Plan and Home and Community-Based Care: <https://leadingage.org/legislation/american-rescue-plan-and-home-and-community-based-care>
- ARP and State and Local Financing: <https://leadingage.org/legislation/american-rescue-plan-and-state-and-local-financing>
- Overall ARP Summary: <https://leadingage.org/legislation/19t-american-rescue-plan-president-signature>

**Stimulus Checks:** One more ARP update. The bill includes another round of stimulus checks for individuals earning less than \$80,000 per year. Those earning less than \$75,000 will get \$1,400, and the amount will taper down to \$0 after income reaches \$80,001. The income thresholds are higher for couples (\$150,000) and heads of households (\$112,500). Adult dependents are eligible for stimulus checks, as are children. The checks are not considered to be income or assets for the purpose of Medicaid eligibility (or other public programs). Income will be counted from 2019 tax returns OR 2020 tax returns if those have been filed. Secretary Yellen said that stimulus checks could hit bank accounts as early as this weekend, so many PACE participants and workers could see those in a matter of days.

**Sequestration Update:** Legislation that will 1) extend the Medicare sequester moratorium (the 2% cut suspension) through December 2021 and 2) Prevent mandatory cuts (known as "PAYGO" or pay as you go) due to budget rules triggered by the reconciliation process that would include a further 4% Medicare spending sequestration if not prevented has been introduced in the House. H.R. 1868 will get a hearing before the House Rules Committee on March 16. See bill text and hearing information here: <https://rules.house.gov/bill/117/hr-1868>. We are optimistic about this bill's chances in the House but will need your help to influence the Senate – more to come on this. PACE organizations, like all Medicare billers, are subject to the sequestration rules and this legislation would prevent cuts to Medicare reimbursement.

**Vaccine and CDC Update:** We continue to meet with the CDC to emphasize the need for vaccine access for PACE organization staff who have not had access to date as well as the participants they serve. We discussed options for mobile vaccination units and mechanisms that our members could be involved in vaccinating their own participants and other homebound older adults. We also sent a letter to Dr. Cameron Webb, a senior advisor on the COVID-19 Response Team, making these asks, including specifically for PACE organizations. You can see that letter here: [https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/Cameron%20Webb%20Letter\\_3921.pdf](https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/Cameron%20Webb%20Letter_3921.pdf). The CDC remains

engaged with us about how to operationalize these ideas and we hope to have more concrete updates soon.

**Health Plan Management System (HPMS) Update:** CMS issued its [2021 quarterly submission dates](#) for PACE organizations for three functions: notice of intent to apply for new organizations, requesting access to the HPMS, and deadlines for initial and service area expansion (SAE) applications. The most immediate deadline is March 26 for initial and SAE applications.

**Nursing Home Visitation Update:** For PACE organizations with participants living in nursing homes, be sure to take note of the new CDC/CMS guidance on visitation. In short, visitation restrictions at the federal level have largely (but not entirely) been lifted. A LeadingAge summary is available here: <https://leadingage.org/regulation/nursing-home-visitation-guidance-updated>; the direct guidance link is here: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-39-nh-revised.pdf>.

**Administration Will Not Defend New Public Charge Rule:** On March 9, the Department of Homeland Security, on behalf of the U.S. government, announced it will no longer defend the Trump 2 Administration's 2019 public charge rule, which would have extended public charge restrictions to immigrants enrolled in Medicaid, including PACE participants. LeadingAge had opposed the Trump Administration's public charge rule and welcomes this policy change. "The 2019 public charge rule was not in keeping with our nation's values. It penalized those who access health benefits and other government services available to them. Consistent with the President's vision, we will continue to implement reforms that improve our legal immigration system," Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas said in a March 9 statement.

**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

- March 8: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20Organization%20Update%203.8.pdf>
- February 26: [https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20update%202.26.21\\_0.pdf](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 4: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20update%202.4.21.pdf>