

PACE Organization Update

March 19, 2021



Lobby Day Sign Up: LeadingAge Lobby Day 2021 is set to take place on April 21. On Lobby Day, LeadingAge members advocate to Congress for aging services and we strongly encourage members of all types to participate. Members and their staff can sign up here: <https://leadingage.org/lobby-day-2021> (deadline is March 24). Among other items, we will push for Congress to adopt proposed legislation that would allow PACE organizations to make risk adjustment submissions based on audio-only telehealth visits (S. 150).

Medicare PAYGO and Sequester Update: The House passed legislation (H.R. 1868) on March 19 that would suspend the sequestration cuts to Medicare (the 2% rate cut) set to expire on March 31, and also prevent an additional 4% Medicare rate cut as a result of “pay as you go,” or PAYGO, rules related to the American Rescue Plan. Without H.R. 1868, PACE organizations and other Medicare providers could see reimbursement rate cuts as high as 6%. LeadingAge strongly supports the bill, sent an action alert to our members in support of it earlier this week, and will continue to push for the bill as it moves to the Senate. See more from LeadingAge here: <https://leadingage.org/legislation/house-votes-suspend-medicare-sequester-and-paygo-cuts>

HCBS Access Act Introduced: This week, Sens. Brown (D-OH), Casey (D-PA), and Hassan (D-NH) and Rep. Dingell (D-MI) introduced a draft framework called the HCBS Access Act. The purpose of the bill is to end the institutional bias in Medicaid and make home and community-based services a mandatory Medicaid benefit nationally. Importantly, the legislation is still development and the sponsors are seeking feedback from stakeholders and the public, including specifically as it relates to PACE organizations. Feedback is due on April 26; LeadingAge will prepare a response in advance of that in consultation with members. Some key links follow:

- Press release: <https://debbiedingell.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=2932>
- Draft legislative text: https://debbiedingell.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hcbs_access_act.pdf
- Stakeholder feedback memo: https://debbiedingell.house.gov/uploadedfiles/home_and_community-based_services_access_act_-_memo_ad.pdf

Infrastructure Package update: The next big legislative item Congress will deal with following the American Rescue Plan is infrastructure. The House Energy and Commerce committee released an initial bill draft for that and will hold a hearing on Monday. The bill as written is expected to be an early iteration in what will likely be a long process. There are some provisions related to health care, but not aging services or PACE specifically. LeadingAge is developing a set of infrastructure proposals, specifically on how Congress can improve the infrastructure of care for older adults. PACE will be a key component of this effort; see more next week once our proposals are released.

Xavier Becerra confirmed: HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra was confirmed and sworn in this week, following close 50-49 confirmation vote. We look forward to working with the Secretary and his team.

Increasing the Number the Number of Vaccinators: HHS has taken action to expand the pool of qualified professionals able to serve as vaccinators. Under its authority under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act) to add additional categories of qualified people authorized to prescribe, dispense, and administer COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, including dentists, EMTs, midwives, optometrists, paramedics, physician assistants, podiatrists, respiratory therapists, and veterinarians. Organizations interested in administering vaccinations should visit www.PHE.gov/COVIDvaccinators to determine if they are eligible. We are reviewing the potential implications for providers like PACE organizations.

Reimbursement Rate for Administering COVID-19 Vaccines: Effective for COVID-19 vaccines administered on or after March 15, 2021, the national average payment rate for physicians, hospitals, pharmacies, and many other immunizers will be \$40 to administer each dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This represents an increase from approximately \$28 to \$40 for the administration of single-dose vaccines and an increase from approximately \$45 to \$80 for the administration of COVID-19 vaccines requiring two doses. The exact payment rate for administration of each dose of a COVID-19 vaccine will depend on the type of entity that furnishes the service and will be geographically adjusted based on where the service is furnished.

We are continuing to dig into the pricing changes but we are hopeful that the combination of increased reimbursement, more supply coming online, and easier to store vaccine product will hopefully allow our members who have appropriate staff – including PACE organizations – to more easily set up ongoing processes to continue vaccinating their own staff, residents, and patients, including those who are homebound. We also hope these types of changes allow for more easy access to ongoing vaccination, via mobile clinics or other community-based partners, for our affordable housing members.

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. On Wednesday next week, CDC staffer Sara Oliver will join us to answer questions about the Johnson and Johnson vaccine and discuss what it might mean for aging services communities. 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 12: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACE%20update%203.12.21.pdf>
- 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
- 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>