

PACE Organization Update

March 26, 2021



LeadingAge Lobby Day: [Sign up today!!](https://leadingage.org/lobby-day-2021) 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>). 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.

PACE Audio-Only Telehealth Bill Introduced in House: On March 23, Congresswoman Terri Sewell led a bipartisan coalition to reintroduce legislation that would allow PACE organizations to make risk adjustment submissions based on audio-only telehealth visits for plan years 2020 and 2021. The bill was previously introduced in the House during the last Congress; for this Congress, it has been introduced in Senate (S.150). The announcement from Rep. Sewell's office is here: <https://sewell.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/rep-sewell-leads-bipartisan-legislation-expand-telehealth-services>; bill text here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11sHbt8nTVKPOnuMQXMc-POam-Xdg2A/view>

Medicare Sequester Update: The Senate voted on March 25 to extend the Medicare sequester suspension through December 31. This bill would prevent Medicare reimbursements, including those for PACE organizations, from being cut by 2% through the end of 2021 as result of sequestration. Because this bill differs from the House bill from last week, the House will need to revote once it comes back in April. Notably, the Senate bill does **not** address the 4% PAYGO cuts to Medicare reimbursements that are slated to take effect later in 2021 (October at the earliest)- but there is more time and additional legislative vehicles to head those off. LeadingAge opposes both the PAYGO cuts and reinstating the sequester; see our statement here: <https://leadingage.org/leadingage-calls-senate-stop-billions-medicare-cuts-scheduled-begin-april-1>

CMS HCBS FMAP Listening Session: On The purpose of the listening session was to help inform the agency's guidance to state Medicaid and related offices as they receive and then ultimately disburse the American Rescue Plan dollars. March 25, CMS held a listening session for stakeholders interested in the HCBS FMAP increase. LeadingAge attended and made comments on rate setting/provider payments, workforce considerations, telehealth, palliative care, and allowing providers to receive FMAP dollars in addition to other COVID-19 relief money (e.g., PPP loans). Other participants included consumer groups, state agency officials, providers and their associations. CMS indicated that they would publish guidance for state agencies soon, but did not offer any other specifics.

Member Call Features CEI: Dr. James Mittelberger, Chief Medical Officer, Center for Elders' Independence, joined the LeadingAge Coronavirus Update Call on March 25. CEI is a PACE organization in Northern California. Dr. Mittelberger shared insights on person-centered care during the pandemic, CEI's PACE centers, telehealth, and vaccination, among others. A summary of the discussion is here: <https://leadingage.org/regulation/covid-19-and-pace-interview-dr-james-mittelberger>; a recording of the call is here: <https://d36529sg6oenc3.cloudfront.net/Events/LeadingAge%20Coronavirus%20Update%20Call%20%282021-03-25%29.mp4>

PPP Extension Set to Take Effect: The Senate passed a bill this week that would extend the Paycheck Protection Program application deadline from March 31 to May 31. The House previously passed the same bill, with the President's support. Prospective borrowers have until the end of May to apply for a first or second draw PPP loan. As a reminder, the American Rescue Plan expanded PPP eligibility to 501(c)(3) organizations with no more than 500 employees **per physical location**, rather than a firm 500 employee global limit.

FEMA Coverage of Funeral Costs: In early April, FEMA will begin [providing financial assistance for funeral expenses incurred after Jan. 20, 2020 for deaths related to COVID-19](#) to help ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the pandemic. The policy was finalized yesterday, and FEMA is now moving rapidly to implement this funeral assistance program nationwide. To find out if you qualify, view the [COVID-19 funeral assistance program policy](#).

Medicare COVID-19 Data Snapshot: CMS released an updated data snapshot detailing the [impact of COVID-19 on Medicare beneficiaries](#), particularly among underserved beneficiaries including racial and ethnic minorities, adults 85 years old and older, and people with certain pre-existing conditions. More than 2.7 million beneficiaries were diagnosed with COVID-19 during the snapshot period, and nearly 700,000 beneficiaries were hospitalized with COVID-19, based on a review of services provided January 1, 2020 to December 26, 2020 (for claims received by January 22, 2021).

Vaccine Update: CDC told us today that this week that the agency shipped 14,000 doses to the LTC pharmacies enrolled in the Retail Program. They sent another 14,000 today and will continue to send doses every week, as needed. CDC will determine how much to send by keeping in close touch with LTC pharmacy partners. Provider organizations do not have to have been part of the Pharmacy Partnership. This is a new program and has nothing to do with the Partnership. Any organization that already has a LTC pharmacy relationship, like a PACE organization, can benefit from this. In addition, LTC pharmacies are free to offer services or clinics to other aging services provider types. States can still allocate additional doses to LTC pharmacies and/or in other ways to connect doses to people who receive or work in aging services.

...and more supply, coming soon. CDC also told us today that supply of vaccine doses will increase dramatically in April and May because all three manufacturers are ramping up production. Increasing numbers of doses will be sent to states. The CDC lead staffer talking about vaccines specifically noted that many states are working on plans to help hospitals routinely vaccinate people before discharge; states are also exploring ways to get people vaccinated before they enter long-term care/aging services settings.

LeadingAge Student Membership: The LeadingAge Student Membership creates opportunities to address the aging services workforce crisis and engages a set of stakeholders to bring innovation to our work. Students now have access to LeadingAge national and state partner career development resources, peer-to-peer connections, and member resources to thrive. Students complete just [one application](#) to get both national and state complimentary memberships to launch a career in aging services. Help us to spread the word and build the next generation of leaders in our field. Visit the [website](#) to explore the benefits and qualifications, and share the opportunity with your networks!

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 19: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACEupdate31921.pdf>
- 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>