

## PACE Organization Update

April 16, 2021



**PACE Legislation Introduced:** On April 15, Sen. Casey introduced the PACE Plus Act, which would expand access to PACE across the country through several provisions, including

- Allowing two-way agreements between POs and the federal government in non-PACE states
- Increase the Medicaid FMAP for PACE services, and provide other financial incentives to states.
- Expand eligible populations.

LeadingAge is a signed supporter of the bill and will work to build support for it now that its introduced.

- Read a one-pager here:  
<https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/PACE%20Plus%20Act%20one%20pager.pdf>
- Once the legislative text gets posted online available it will be here:  
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/1162/text?r=1&s=5>

### **Medicare Sequester bill signed and CMS releases MLN on sequestration suspension continuation:**

President Biden signed the Medicare sequester bill on Wednesday, which suspends the 2% Medicare reimbursement cut ("the sequester") through the end of 2021. This applies to all Medicare billers, including PACE organizations. An article is [here](#).

Medicare announced a delay in payments for services on/after April 1 in anticipation of this legislation and CMS issued a new MLN on April 16<sup>th</sup> that says:

*The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act suspended the sequestration payment adjustment percentage of 2% applied to all Medicare Fee-for-Service (FFS) claims from May 1 through December 31, 2020. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, extended the suspension period to March 31, 2021. An Act to Prevent Across-the-Board Direct Spending Cuts, and for Other Purposes, signed into law on April 14, 2021, extends the suspension period to December 31, 2021.*

*Medicare Administrative Contractors will:*

- Release any previously held claims with dates of service on or after April 1
- Reprocess any claims paid with the reduction applied

**Providers do not need to take any action.**

**Virtual Lobby Day Resources:** Every registered attendee will receive a link to access the Advocacy Day meeting platform that will have individual schedules, talking points, resources and connections to other meeting attendees. Here are some links to some other key resources:

- LeadingAge Virtual Lobby Day Talking Points and Resources: [www.leadingage.org/lobbyday-2021](http://www.leadingage.org/lobbyday-2021)
- Open Office Hours For Questions and Lobby Day Information – 2pm Eastern on Friday, April 16th and Monday, April 19th – Zoom Link Here:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87383646213?pwd=RDRaRVh4MUVYUTFYU1BzTEhwTFFaZz09#success>
- Recording of the Know Before You Go Lobby Day Training is here:  
<https://d36529sg6oenc3.cloudfront.net/Events/LeadingAge%20Know%20Before%20You%20Go%20Virtual%20Lobby%20Day%20Training%20%282021-04-14%29.mp4>

**Biden Budget Request Update:** Last week, we included initial details about the Biden administration’s discretionary budget request. An article with more information from us is available here: <https://leadingage.org/legislation/president%E2%80%99s-request-health-preparedness-vulnerable-communities>. The request includes a 23% increase for HHS, including increased funding for discretionary programs serving older adults like the Older Americans Act programs. Notably, financing for Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements, services, etc., are **mandatory** spending and are not part of this document or the discretionary budget process.

**Trends in Racial and Ethnic Disparities in COVID-19 Hospitalizations:** CDC released on April 16 [a report](#) on the trends in racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 hospitalization by region in the United States from March 2020 – December 2020. COVID-19 disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States. Within each U.S. Census region, the proportion of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 was highest for Hispanic or Latino patients. Racial and ethnic disparities were largest during May–July 2020 and became less pronounced as the pandemic spread throughout the country; however, disparities remained in December 2020 in all regions. Understanding the social determinants of health contributing to geographic and temporal differences in racial and ethnic disparities at a local level can help guide public health prevention strategies and equitable resource allocation, including COVID-19 vaccination, to address COVID-19–related health disparities. Report found here: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7015e2.htm?s\\_cid=mm7015e2\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7015e2.htm?s_cid=mm7015e2_w)

**Biden Nominee Updates:** On Thursday, the Senate Finance Committee held a nominations hearing for Chiquita Brooks-LaSure (nominee for CMS administrator) and Andrea Palm (nominee for Deputy HHS Secretary). You can watch a replay of the hearing at the link that follows. Senator Whitehouse reiterated his commitment to an advanced illness model and Ms. BrooksLaSure committed to working with him on the issue. Senators Casey, Menendez, Brown, and Hassan raised the importance of expanding home and community-based services. Chairman Wyden and Senator Brown both talked about promoting parity between traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage; Chairman Wyden talked about another chronic care package to achieve this goal. Senator Hassan also talked about the experience of home health aides during COVID and got commitments to work on issues for those workers as well. Hearing web page: <https://www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/hearing-to-consider-the-nominations-ofandrea-joanpalm-to-be-deputy-secretary-of-health-and-human-services-and-chiquita-brooks-lasure-tobeadministrator-of-the-centers-for-medicare-and-medicaid-services>

**Johnson and Johnson Vaccine Update:** This Thursday on our 3:30 Update call, Josh Sharfstein spoke about the J & J vaccine pause and the implications for aging services providers, including those whose residents/patients have already received this vaccine. [Here’s an article](#) summarizing the interview. In short, the decision was made out of an abundance of caution and older adults who have received the J & J vaccine probably “have other things that are more important to worry about.” Dr. Sharfstein has been interviewed widely in the media on this topic over the past few days, and is Vice Dean for Public Health Practice and Community Engagement at Johns Hopkins University and former Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Principal Deputy Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and Commissioner of Health for Baltimore City.

**USDA Telemedicine Grants for rural-serving organizations:** The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) is soliciting applications for their Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant program. Aging services organizations including PACE can apply for this grant to buy the equipment and software necessary to deploy telemedicine services to rural residents. Grant funds may be used for: Acquisition of eligible capital assets, such as: Broadband facilities; Audio, video and interactive video equipment; Terminal and

data terminal equipment; Computer hardware, network components and software; and Inside wiring and similar infrastructure that further DLT services. Acquisition of instructional programming that is a capital asset. Acquisition of technical assistance and instruction for using eligible equipment. Applications must be submitted electronically through grants.gov no later than June 4, 2021. Read more here: [https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fact-sheet/508\\_RD\\_FS\\_RUS\\_DLTGrant.pdf](https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fact-sheet/508_RD_FS_RUS_DLTGrant.pdf)

**Johns Hopkins Recruiting for Study on Home Care Workers and Vaccines:** JHU is conducting a study investigating factors that impact COVID-19 vaccine uptake. They are looking for individuals who provide in-home care to discuss considerations regarding COVID-19 vaccine awareness, access, and acceptance. The discussions consist of 90-minute focus groups that are hosted remotely (web-based). Participants are compensated with a \$50 Amazon gift card emailed at the conclusion of the session. Please see [this flyer](#) for more information and to sign up.

**Weekly call update:** Calls on Monday and Thursday at 3:30 EST next week will feature new Johnson and Johnson information as it emerges from CDC, as well as a look at a county public health system that has figured out how to find 2 and vaccinate homebound people and some new tools for infection control. On Monday, April 19, Maureen Linehan from the King County (WA) Public Health Department will talk about how her agency geared up to find homebound older adults and got them vaccinated. Callers from other locations will find ideas worth talking to their own public health departments about. On Thursday April 22, Lisa Thomson and Sue LaGrange from LeadingAge Partner Pathways Health will join us to talk about the new infection control toolkit. The best practices learned during the pandemic will be applicable well beyond the nursing home setting. Call registration is here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2218416852977539339>

**NO UPDATE CALL ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21. Instead, please join us for Lobby Day if you signed up.**

#### Update archive

- April 9: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACEupdate4921.pdf>
- April 2: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACEupdate4221.pdf>
- March 26: <https://leadingage.org/sites/default/files/PACEupdate32621.pdf>
- 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>