

# Senior Housing Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

June 26, 2020

**RAD for PRAC Call with HUD staff** – On Tuesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, at 2pm ET, LeadingAge is hosting a [call on RAD for PRAC](#). For the first half of the hour, we'll hear updates from HUD staff about RAD flexibilities during COVID-19 and other updates. For the second part of the call, we'll have a discussion on new RAD for PRAC forms released by the agency, as well as peer-sharing opportunities (advance questions welcome). HUD is also currently accepting feedback on the new RAD for PRAC forms; we welcome your comments by the end of June or during the RAD for PRAC update call on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**COVID-19 Relief: HUD-Assisted Affordable Senior Housing Asks.** We've put our affordable housing asks for the next COVID-10 relief package into a handy [one pager](#) as part of our Act for Older Adults campaign. Congressional offices are sifting through options and proposals for the next relief package now, which is perfect because [now is the time](#) we'd like stakeholders to reach out to their House and Senate members.

**HUD hosts physical inspection workshop** – In the first session of HUD's new [NSPIRE workgroup series](#), HUD staff hosted discussions among stakeholders, including LeadingAge staff and members. HUD discussed barriers for implementation of the new physical inspection demonstration program, and previewed ideas for adapting the program because of health concerns. Among other updates, the agency announced that it is considering video remote self-inspections with residents; although we are encouraging HUD to think proactively about reducing virus risk throughout any in-unit inspection protocol, LeadingAge and others pushed back based on the technological capabilities, mobility restrictions, and privacy concerns for older adult communities. In the meantime, both traditional REAC and NSPIRE inspections remain on hold due to COVID-19.

## **Reopening Considerations for Affordable Housing Providers**

In this new, 19-minute QuickCast, Juliana Bilowich reviews [reopening guidance](#) from HUD and the CDC, as well as important factors senior housing communities should consider for long-term crisis recovery.

**Diagnostic Testing Support for Housing Providers** – To help housing providers partner with health departments to help low-income, at-risk residents access COVID-19 testing, we developed a template email/letter to help affordable housing providers [partner with their local health departments on diagnostic testing](#) and other supports through COVID-19. The template helps providers locate their help department based on zip code or city/county, and then requests support based on the challenges for housing providers and their residents to access testing.

**New HUD Report. Increase of Older Adult Housing Needs.** HUD has posted a new report, *Worst Case Housing Needs: 2019 Report to Congress*. Nationally, the overall number of households with worst case housing needs declined by 7% between 2015 and 2017, the period of time covered by the biannual report. However, worst case housing needs among older adults increased during this period by 80,000, or more than 4%. Katie issued a strong [statement](#) about the need to attend to this problem, especially in light of the demographics. Here's an [article](#) with a link to the report.

**LeadingAge Days of National Action highly successful.** Members engaged generously in one of our biggest advocacy efforts to fight for COVID-19 relief. Between today's Day of Action and the one we held in March:

- 10 action alerts went out, with 9,029 advocates sending 30,616 messages to Congress.
- Over 1,000 provider organizations signed on to a Congressional letter with our COVID advocacy asks. Members have joined state partners in 33 virtual Congressional meetings.

**Massive Senior Housing Investment Proposal** – After announcing their \$1.5 trillion [infrastructure bill](#) last week, the House released the bill text with more details. Of the proposed \$100 billion for housing initiatives, \$2.5 billion would go to senior housing through HUD's Section 202 program to fund new construction, rental assistance, and services. The proposal includes an expansion of the Housing Credit and funding for the public housing capital fund, CDBG, the HOME program, Section 811 for people with disabilities, among other housing programs. The proposal also invests in broadband access and healthcare capacity to respond to COVID-19.

**GAO says 29% of older adult renters are severely cost burdened.** A new report out from the Government Accountability Office looks broadly at rental housing in the United States. Among the findings: 65+ renter households have the highest severe and moderate rent burdens of any age group. Households are severely burdened if they pay more than 50% of their income for rent and are moderately burdened if they pay more than 30% of their income for rent. The [GAO report](#) also found that older adults 65+ make up more than half of the seven million household increase of renter households from 2001 to 2017.

**Article on vulnerability of affordable senior housing residents.** Kaiser Health News published an article, [Seniors in Affordable Housing Vulnerable to Coronavirus](#), on how older adults in HUD privately owned and public housing programs have "largely been overlooked." The article reports on not-so-positive experiences in affordable senior housing and on the great work happening in some communities, including by LeadingAge member organization Selfhelp Community Services in their 11 New York City communities. While we see the negatives in the story, we'll also use it as a call to action for more resources and attention to be paid to providers.

**HUD and FCC to co-host webinar on Lifeline program.** The FCC's Lifeline program provides qualifying low income consumers with monthly discounts on internet or phone service. The webinar is on [June 30 at 3pm ET and registration is required](#). The webinar will provide an overview of the Lifeline program, including qualification requirements, application process, benefits to consumers, and ways to get assistance on the application process. The need to connect older adults with internet service, and thus connect to telehealth and combat social isolation, has become very apparent during COVID-19.

**Housing Advisory Group Call** – Join your LeadingAge housing policy team and other housing providers for federal updates and peer-sharing about COVID-19. Our next Housing Advisory Group call will be held on Monday, [June 29, at 12:30 EST](#) and will discuss the latest issues from the field, including reopening consideration, and rent receipts. To join our Housing Advisory Group, email [Linda](#) or [Juliana](#).

**LeadingAge Daily Calls** – We have extended our daily 3:30pm EST live call updates through July. Every week, we feature affordable housing and other aging services provider members to share their COVID-19 experiences. Need to adjust your registration or sign up? Visit the [registration page](#) (again) so you'll never miss an update. You can also access recordings of these Monday – Friday calls under "[Member Communications](#)."