

Home Health and Hospice Weekly Recap

April 2nd, 2021



- American Jobs Plan update:** On March 31, the White House rolled out the American Jobs Plan, a \$2 trillion set of proposals that includes, among others, about \$400 billion dedicated to expanding and improving home and community-based services. Limited details are included in the American Jobs Plan fact sheet on where those dollars would go, but we anticipate there would be significant funding available to states to expand HCBS to those on waiting lists and beyond. The full fact sheet is here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-americanjobs-plan/>
Next steps from LeadingAge are in the next section...
- LeadingAge Blueprint for a Better Aging Infrastructure:** On April 1, LeadingAge introduced its Blueprint for a Better Aging Infrastructure. The Blueprint is meant to add to the national discussion on infrastructure and next steps in Congress, and is comprised of five sections – workforce, services in the home and community (including home health and hospice), affordable housing, nursing homes, and long-term care structural and financing reform. Our Blueprint is based on the principle, confirmed by President Biden’s American Jobs Plan, that building an aging services infrastructure for the 21st century is a critical element of any overall infrastructure conversation. We sent a letter to Congressional leadership outlining the plan, and will advocate for the Blueprint elements as part of our Lobby Day agenda
- Medicare Sequester:** With Congress on recess, there was no legislative action on the Medicare sequester bill following the Senate vote last week. We anticipate the House will pass the Senate bill (suspending the sequester through the end of 2021) when it returns in mid-April. Meanwhile, the CMS Medicare Learning Network issued this notice on March 30: “In anticipation of possible Congressional action to extend the 2% sequester reduction suspension, we instructed the Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to hold all claims with dates of service on or after April 1, 2021, for a short period without affecting providers’ cash flow. This will minimize the volume of claims the MACs must reprocess if Congress extends the suspension; the MACs will automatically reprocess any claims paid with the reduction applied if necessary.” We will provide updates as we learn more, but home health, hospice, and other Medicare billers may experience delays in payments over the next couple of weeks
- Reminder on accelerated and advanced payments:** As we reported last week, for those providers that took Medicare accelerated or advanced payments, the repayment was set to begin. CMS announced that they began on March 30th and [published a MLN article on the topic](#). Your repayments will begin a year from when you got your first accelerated or advance payment from CMS.
- Hospice Pepper Report User’s Guide Updated.** The 10th edition can be found here: https://pepper.cbrpepper.org/Portals/0/Documents/PEPPER/HOSPICE/HospicePEPPERUsersGuide_Edition10_508.pdf. There is a new target area added to the reports -- Average Number of Part D Claims per Hospice Episode.

6. **Hospice Benefit Component VBID FAQ released.** The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) released a [new FAQ on the hospice benefit component](#) of the Value Based Insurance Design (VBID)
7. **[CMS Training on Hospice Quality Reporting Program.](#)** CMS will be hosting a webinar on Thursday, April 15, 2021 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. ET. The purpose of this training is to provide a general overview of the changes included in the Hospice Item Set (HIS) Manual V3.00. Specific topics include:
 - a. The Hospice Quality Reporting Program (HQRP) Requirements.
 - b. Changes in Hospice Item Set (HIS) Manual V3.00.
 - c. The data sources that will comprise the HQRP.
 - d. The new quality measure (QM) created from administrative data (Medicare claims).
 - e. HQRP resources.
8. **FEMA Funeral reimbursement program beginning April 12th, 2021.** We reported last week on a program that will begin officially this month. FEMA will begin [providing financial assistance for funeral expenses incurred after Jan. 20, 2020 for deaths related to coronavirus](#) (COVID-19) to help ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the pandemic. The policy was finalized and FEMA is now moving rapidly to implement this funeral assistance program nationwide and will begin collecting applications on April 12th via their call center – no online applications will be accepted. For more information, [please see our article on the program.](#)
9. **Vaccine Outreach Funding:** The CDC and the Administration for Community Living (ACL) announced this week a joint effort (CDC-funded, ACL-administered) to provide the aging and disability networks with close to \$100 million for vaccine outreach, education, transportation, and other supports to reach older adults and people with disabilities. The state units on aging (SUAs) and the area agencies on aging (AAAs) will receive \$50 million, and \$26 million will go to the aging and disability resource centers (ADRCs). We don't know how much each specific entity will get. LeadingAge is reaching out to the associations that represent these organizations to discuss possible next steps and partnership opportunities. More information is available here: <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/partnership-cdc-increase-access-covid-19-vaccines>
10. **PPP Application Period Extended.** President Biden signed legislation today extending the PPP deadline to May 31 for borrower applications and June 30 for banks to process applications. The program was set to expire tomorrow, but prospective borrowers now have until the end of May to get applications in. See more here: <https://leadingage.org/legislation/ppp-loan-application-period-extended-may-31>
11. **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>