



September 9, 2024

Chiquita Brooks-LaSure  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850

Dear Administrator Brooks LaSure:

We are writing today to follow up on our [May 31 letter](#) regarding nursing home requirements for COVID vaccination reporting through the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) system. While COVID data reporting on cases, hospitalizations, and deaths has been addressed in the Calendar Year 2025 Home Health payment rule, we have not received a response to our concerns about vaccination reporting. As you know, nursing homes have been reporting COVID vaccination status through NHSN on a weekly basis since May 2021. However, recent developments in the Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Quality Reporting Program (QRP) bring the necessity of weekly NHSN reporting into question, particularly as we approach the beginning of this respiratory virus season more than a year after the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency. We ask CMS to take prompt regulatory action to eliminate what has become unnecessary and duplicative weekly reporting requirements of COVID vaccination data.

**Resident COVID-19 Vaccination Reporting Requirements** At this time, nursing homes continue to report COVID-19 vaccination data on residents on a weekly basis through NHSN per the requirements finalized in the Calendar Year (CY) 2022 Home Health payment rule. As noted in our previous letter, a resident COVID vaccination measure was subsequently added to the SNF QRP with the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 SNF Prospective Payment System (PPS) final rule, with data reporting beginning on October 1, 2024. The data for this measure, however, will not be collected from the weekly NHSN reporting, but from a new item on the Minimum Data Set (MDS) assessment. This assessment is performed on all residents, both short-term and long-term, upon admission and is updated with each subsequent assessment. This means that without action from CMS, nursing homes will duplicate resident COVID vaccination reporting beginning October 1 by reporting weekly through NHSN and quarterly or more frequently on the MDS. **We urge CMS to take action prior to October 1, 2024 to avoid duplicate reporting by terminating requirements for nursing homes to report COVID vaccination status through NHSN.**

**Healthcare Personnel COVID-19 Vaccination Reporting Requirements** More than a year past the May 2023 end of the COVID public health emergency, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) is taking strides to assimilate COVID practices into normal respiratory virus practices. COVID mitigation measures have been incorporated into broader [respiratory virus guidelines](#) and there is an aim to align COVID vaccinations with an annual schedule similar to flu vaccinations. As such, it makes sense for CMS to also align policies for respiratory viruses. Healthcare personnel vaccination measures for COVID and flu vaccinations were added to the SNF QRP with the FY 2022 and FY 2023 SNF PPS rules, respectively. However, the data collection for these two similar and equally important measures varies drastically. While the COVID measure is based on NHSN data reported on a weekly basis, the flu measure is based

on a single report submitted annually that includes the vaccination status of all healthcare personnel working in the nursing home during respiratory virus season. Both measures provide useful information about infection control practices of healthcare personnel, but only one measure, the flu vaccination measure, does so without imposing unnecessary burden on providers by requiring weekly reporting of a rate that changes very little after the initial vaccination window of early fall. **We urge CMS to take immediate action to change healthcare personnel COVID vaccination reporting requirements to align with healthcare personnel flu vaccination reporting requirements**, with nursing homes submitting one single report through NHSN by May 15 each year to report on the COVID and flu vaccination statuses of healthcare personnel working in their buildings during respiratory virus season.

We thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. Nursing home quality depends upon many factors; efficient operations is one of them. The sooner nursing homes can stop duplicative and unnecessary reporting, the sooner valuable time and personnel resources can be returned to resident care and system improvement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jodi Eyigor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jodi Eyigor  
Director, Nursing Home Quality & Policy

Cc: Jonathan Blum, Principal Deputy Administrator  
William Harris, Senior Advisor, Office of the Administrator  
Celeste Saunders, Acting Director, Division of Nursing Homes