



LeadingAge Events and Resources

1. **Upcoming Life Safety Webinar for Hospice Providers.** The *Life Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Post-COVID Compliance* webinar is now live for registration on the LeadingAge Learning Hub!

[Life Safety and Emergency Preparedness: Post-COVID Compliance](#), Thursday April 8 at 2 p.m. ET

This Webinar details current life safety and emergency preparedness challenges nursing home and hospice providers should plan for as they return to pre-pandemic operations.

- Consider approaches to sunsetting 1135 waivers for alarm and fire suppression system testing, emergency storage, emergency preparedness education for staff, and other changes that will expire after the national emergency declaration ends.
- Learn about trends in survey citations and hot-button issues that may arise when regular life safety surveys resume.
- Receive a template to help you document your organization's COVID-19 response as an official emergency preparedness drill to meet federal survey disaster planning requirements.

Link for more information: <https://learninghub.leadingage.org/courses/life-safety-and-emergency-preparedness-post-covid-compliance>

2. **COVID-19 Vaccine Town Hall For Frontline Care Workers - Thursday, March 4 -- 7:00-8:30 p.m. Eastern.** LeadingAge, in partnership with the [Black Coalition Against COVID](#) (BCAC), is sponsoring a national town hall with the aging services community to address concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine, particularly among direct care workers. The agenda will feature senior leadership from the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Historically Black Colleges and Universities' medical schools, the National Black Nurses Association, and a variety of nationally recognized experts. This town hall is open to anyone regardless of background or position in providing care. This national town hall will be broadcast by [blackdoctor.org](#) through its Facebook Live and Youtube streaming services. A link to these sites will be available later this week. Please mark your calendars for Thursday, March 4 -- 7:00-8:30 p.m. ET to take part in this important discussion. For more information, email [Joe Franco](#).
3. **Medicare Part B Rate Calculator Available.** The member-only Medicare Part B rate calculator is now available [here](#). The tool allows a member to identify their location specific rates for Part B services including therapy. It accounts for the rate changes from the year-end legislation that increased rates from those published in the final rule.

Vaccinating older adults at home

1. **Vaccinating homebound individuals.** The Trust for America's Health (TFAH) held a meeting on Thursday February 25th aimed at building partnerships to work on getting vaccines into the arms of people who are homebound. Dr. Bechara Choucair, White House Senior Coordinator on COVID vaccines, spoke at the meeting, emphasizing the Administration's commitment that "no older person will be left behind." Approximately 20% of adults over

age 65 are homebound, by one definition discussed at the meeting. Dr. Choucair spoke at length about the WH commitment to equity in vaccine distribution. Providers, public health system representatives, aging network experts, and individuals from other key associations participated. The take home messages from the meeting are:

- The biggest barrier is scarce vaccine supply – “it’s the Hunger Games,” one person said. Older adults must be prioritized, including those who are homebound.
- Government should communicate a clear picture of the target population, since estimates range from 2 million to 12 million people, and develop systems to provide them access to vaccines.
- Top leaders should speak directly to homebound individuals and caregivers to let them know they are not forgotten.
- It’s essential to work with CMS to come up with reimbursement solutions to pay for in home vaccinations.
- New partnerships are necessary.

The meeting was sponsored by the John A. Hartford Foundation and Cambia Health Foundation. A summary report will be developed, including policy recommendations.

2. **Guidance for Vaccinating Older Adults.** Last week, CDC published [guidance for vaccinating older adults and people with disabilities for vaccination sites](#). The guidance covers planning for outreach, planning for appointments, scheduling, vaccinating, and planning for after vaccinations. For providers helping residents/clients/patients navigate the process, the planning and scheduling sections are probably the most useful.

Highlight from this week’s LeadingAge Coronavirus calls

1. **People with dementia are more vulnerable to COVID-19.** Dr. Rebecca Edelmayer from the Alzheimer’s Association joined the Coronavirus Update Call to discuss the findings of a recent study exploring the relationships between dementia and COVID-19 risks, hospitalizations, deaths and disparities. An article summarizing the interview can be found [here](#).
2. **Encouraging straight talk and hope about vaccinations.** Dr. Monica Gandhi from the University of California, San Francisco, joined the Coronavirus Update call. She believes that as the percentage of the population that is vaccinated grows, we will reach herd immunity and be able to lift many, many precautions – maybe by September. Read more of her insights [here](#).

Telehealth

1. **Focus on future of telehealth continues (including hospice and home health!).** Even with the extension of public health emergency waivers, including those related to telehealth, until the end of 2021, Congress and the Administration are already starting to talk about which pandemic related flexibilities are here to stay and monitoring for fraud, waste, and abuse in telehealth. [This article outlines](#) a new piece of legislation that would expand some of the telehealth flexibilities permanently (including the hospice face to face recertification). The article also summarizes an announced Office of the Inspector General report that will examine home health agencies’ telehealth related activity during the pandemic.

2. **FCC's Expanded COVID-19 Telehealth Program and Broadband Plans.** The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) monthly Virtual Commission Meeting was held on February 17, 2021. The FCC provided a presentation on the expansion of the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, the creation of the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, and work the agency is doing to improve its broadband maps. All of the initiatives received additional funding allocated through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, signed into law on December 27, 2020. A summary of the meeting's key points is [available](#).

From the Hill and the Administration

1. **Highlights from Secretary Designate Becerra Confirmation Hearing Include Support for Advanced Illness Care and Telehealth**
Secretary Designate Becerra had confirmation hearings in both the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) committee and the Senate Finance Committee this week. He signaled strong support for virtual care continuing after the pandemic, improvements to home and community based services, a focus on health equity, and the provider relief fund. Of note to home health and hospice members, he also expressed support for engaging on pilots to expand access to end of life and advanced illness care.
2. **Section J Training for Home Health:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is offering a web-based training that provides an overview of the assessment and coding of the standardized patient assessment data elements (SPADEs) related to falls in Section J: Health Conditions. This 45-minute course is intended for providers in Home Health Agencies (HHAs), Inpatient Rehabilitation Facilities (IRFs), Long-Term Care Hospitals (LTCHs), and Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs), and is designed to be used on demand anywhere you can access a browser. The course is divided into six sections and includes interactive exercises to test your knowledge related to the assessment and coding of J1800 and J1900.
[Please CLICK HERE to access the training.](#)
3. **FDA Meeting Feb 26th to Discuss Johnson & Johnson Vaccine:** FDA's Vaccine and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee Meeting to discuss the Janssen's (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine will be held from 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM ET. VRBPAC [meeting agenda](#) and [briefing materials](#) have been released and the meeting will be live webcast [here](#).
4. **Paycheck Protection Program temporary pause for some applicants.** The White House announced today that starting Wednesday, only organizations with 20 or fewer employees will be able to apply for PPP loans. This limit will last for 14 days, after which all eligible applicants can resume seeking PPP loans. Prospective borrowers with more than 20 employees who have not yet applied for the loans and are planning to might want to work with their bank to ensure the application is submitted before Wednesday, or plan to wait until March for the application to go in the system. More details in this [PPP fact sheet](#).
5. **100 Days of Advocacy Resources.** As Katie Smith Sloan mentioned on our call today, we will need to use our voices in stereo to ensure that Congress and the new Administration works to enact laws and policies that will directly help our members. Right now Congress is debating the next COVID-19 relief bill and while the House measures are pretty solid at this point, there is still time to get added relief in the Senate bill. Please encourage your members to join our advocacy campaign and take action [here](#). Additional tools and resources for our 100 days of advocacy campaign are [here](#).