

Hospice and Palliative Care Resources for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 01/05/22

NHPCO publishes the COVID-19 Update once a week on Wednesdays. Should there be breaking news of importance to the provider community, we will communicate that as needed.

Policy Update

CMS Vaccine Mandate Guidance for States Not Included in Louisiana or Missouri Court Orders

On December 28, 2021, CMS released vaccine mandate guidance for all providers, [QSO-22-07-all](#), and hospice-specific guidance, [QSO-22-07-attachment C](#), for the vaccine mandate. Included in the guidance is the list of states for whom this vaccine mandate DOES NOT APPLY. NHPCO members will find a Regulatory Alert: CMS Vaccine Mandate Guidance for States Not Included in Louisiana or Missouri Court Orders (12/29/21) that offers helpful analysis. Members will find this alert on the [Regulatory Alerts and Updates](#) page of the website.

NHPCO Submits Comments on CMS Vaccine Mandate Interim Final Rule

On January 4, 2022, NHPCO submitted comments on the CMS vaccine mandate interim final rule (IFC). The December 28, 2021, guidance addressed some of the comments in the IFC, but NHPCO made several recommendations for CMS consideration. Read the [NHPCO comment letter](#) (01/04/22).

Five Things to Know about Biden's Omicron Plan

[The Hill](#) reports, "President Biden laid out a plan Tuesday to tackle the new threat of increasing COVID-19 cases across the U.S. that is largely due to omicron quickly becoming the dominant variant."

Fact Sheet on President Biden Actions Regarding Omicron

On December 21, 2021, President Biden announced new actions to protect Americans and help communities and hospitals battle Omicron, building on the robust plan he announced earlier this month to get people maximum protection ahead of the winter and prepare for rising cases driven by the new variant. Visit the [White House website](#) to find the fact sheet.

Provider Update

U.S. Reports Nearly 1 Million COVID-19 Cases in a Day

[Reuters](#) reports, "The United States reported nearly 1 million new coronavirus infections on Monday, the highest daily tally of any country in the world and nearly double the previous U.S. peak set a week ago as the spread of the Omicron variant showed no signs of slowing."

Stories from the Field: Examples of Successful Worker COVID-19 Vaccination Programs

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, including in workplaces. Employers, labor organizations, healthcare, and public health

organizations, and community-based organizations have developed many types of policies and programs to promote worker vaccination. [Visit the CDC website](#) to learn more.

FDA Takes Multiple Actions to Expand Use of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine

On January 3, 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration amended the [emergency use authorization](#) (EUA) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to:

- Expand the use of a single booster dose to include use in individuals 12 through 15 years of age.
- Shorten the time between the completion of primary vaccination of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and a booster dose to at least five months.
- Allow for a third primary series dose for certain immunocompromised children ages 5 to 11.

In December, FDA Authorizes Oral Antivirals for Treatment of COVID-19

- On December 22, 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an [emergency use authorization](#) for Pfizer's Paxlovid (nirmatrelvir tablets and ritonavir tablets, co-packaged for oral use) for the treatment of mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in adults and pediatric patients (12 years of age and older). Read the announcement on the FDA website.
- On December 23, 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued an [emergency use authorization](#) for Merck's molnupiravir for the treatment of mild-to-moderate coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in adults with positive results of direct SARS-CoV-2 viral testing, and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19.

Resources

Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages

The Centers for Disease Control has issued updated guidance to enhance protection for healthcare personnel, patients, and visitors and to address concerns about potential impacts on the healthcare system given a surge of SARS-CoV-2 infections. These updates will be refined as additional information becomes available to inform recommended actions. [Visit the CDC website](#) for more information.

Two New Over-the-Counter At-Home COVID-19 Tests Brought to U.S. Market

The Biden-Harris Administration has brought two new over-the-counter, at-home COVID-19 tests to the U.S. market. The tests, one manufactured by SD Biosensor and distributed by Roche and the other manufactured by Siemens, have received emergency use authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) after being evaluated through the Administration's new accelerated pathway to support FDA review of tests with potential for large-scale manufacturing that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced just two months ago. Read the [HHS press release](#) (12/29/21).

Topic Collection: Disasters and Healthcare Disparity

A post on the [ASPR TRACIE website](#) reports, "Healthcare inequity has always been a challenge across the U.S. The rate of disasters has increased over the years and the COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged the country, striking communities of color and other underserved populations especially hard. Healthcare professionals and emergency managers may benefit from a better understanding of the complex relationships that affect fair access to healthcare."