

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



### NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 01/06/21

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links. Please note, these Updates are published when there is helpful news to share.

**“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America.”**

– Preamble to the United States Constitution

### Policy Update

#### **NHPCO Requests Extension of Public Health Emergency from HHS Secretary Azar**

On January 5, 2021, NHPCO sent a [request to HHS Secretary Alex Azar](#) to extend the COVID-19 public health emergency beyond the current expiration date of January 21, 2021, before he leaves his position as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

#### **FDA Discusses Recommendations for Vaccine Regimen**

Ideas like cutting dosages in half or skipping the second shot have been floated to accelerate U.S. distribution of the COVID vaccine. But FDA officials says that deviating from the tested and approved protocols could undermine the vaccination efforts.

On January 4, National Public Radio (NPR) reported The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is warning health care workers that any changes to the authorized dosing schedules of COVID-19 vaccines currently being administered significantly place public health at risk and undermine "the historic vaccination effort to protect the population" from the coronavirus pandemic. The first and second doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are approved to be delivered within a 21-day window, while the Moderna injections should be spread over 28 days. When given at those intervals, both vaccines are about 95% effective, according to the respective drugmakers. But the FDA has heard suggestions that the number of limited doses could be stretched by cutting them in half, extending the length of time between doses, or mixing and matching vaccines in order to immunize more people against COVID-19. (Romo, 1/4)

CNN also reported that anyone who receives the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine must get two full doses, two top US Food and Drug Administration officials said Monday, January 4. They also dismissed other ideas for stretching the vaccine supply and said people who are speculating about the possibility of making do with just one dose or cutting doses in half are misinterpreting the data. (Fox, 1/4)

#### **Temporary Halt to Residential Evictions**

On January 5, 2021, the Federal Register posted a notice requiring a [Temporary Halt in Residential Evictions to Prevent the Further Spread of COVID-19 \(CDC\)](#). CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield signed a declaration determining that the evictions of tenants could be detrimental to public health control measures to slow the spread of SARS-Cov-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

## **Provider Update**

### **8 Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccination Program**

Now that there are authorized and recommended vaccines to prevent COVID-19 in the United States, the [CDC offers eight things](#) you need to know about the new COVID-19 Vaccination Program and COVID-19 vaccines.

### **Emerging SARS-CoV-2 Variants**

In the United Kingdom (UK), a new variant strain of SARS-CoV-2 (known as 20B/501Y.V1, VOC 202012/01, or B.1.1.7 lineage) emerged with an unusually large number of mutations. This variant has since been detected in numerous countries around the world, including the United States (US) and Canada. More information on the variants is [available from the CDC](#). In South Africa, another variant of SARS-CoV-2 (known as 20C/501Y.V2 or B.1.351 lineage) emerged independently of the B.1.1.7 lineage. This variant shares some mutations with the B.1.1.7 lineage. Cases attributed to this variant have been detected outside of South Africa.

### **COVID-19 Vaccines and Severe Allergic Reactions**

[CDC provides recommendations](#) on what to do if you experience an allergic reaction after getting a COVID-19 vaccination or have an allergic reaction to other vaccines.

### **Project ECHO COVID-19 Global Conversations**

This series of teleECHO sessions addresses up-to-date concerns, information on evidence-based best practices and updates on the transmission, spread, and clinical management of COVID-19. The next session is on January 11, 2021, 10:00 – 11:30 ET. [Register for the session.](#)

## **Resources**

### **The Johns Hopkins 30-Minute COVID-19 Briefing**

As the pandemic surges to dangerous, record-breaking levels, the Johns Hopkins University is launching a series of bi-weekly webcast briefings. This first briefing will be Friday, January 8, 2021, 12:00-12:30 ET. The series will provide timely, accessible updates on the state of the pandemic and public health responses and will offer opportunities for live Q&A with leading experts from the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. [Learn more online.](#)

### **Pandemic Ravages Health Workers of Color**

A Kaiser Health News article, "[Covid 'Decimated Our Staff' as the Pandemic Ravages Health Workers of Color,](#)" discusses the way that COVID-19 has taken an outsize toll on Black and Hispanic Americans. And those disparities extend to the medical workers who have intubated them, cleaned their bedsheets and held their hands in their final days. People of color account for about 65% of fatalities in cases in which there is race and ethnicity data. [One recent study](#) found health care workers of color were more than twice as likely as their white counterparts to test positive for the virus.

### **Communication Resources from NIH**

Community leaders play a vital role in making sure their communities have important, accurate information about public health and clinical research that can benefit them. Find [resources shared by NIH](#)—from videos and social media posts to handouts and fact sheets—to help you talk with your communities about these critical topics.