

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 01/12/22

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

Administration Requires Insurance Companies to Cover the Cost of At-Home COVID-19 Tests

“As part of its ongoing efforts across many channels to expand Americans’ access to free testing, the Biden-Harris Administration is requiring insurance companies and group health plans to cover the cost of over-the-counter, at-home COVID-19 tests, so people with private health coverage can get them for free starting January 15th.” Learn more in the press release issued by the [Department of Health and Human Services](#) (01/10/22).

Addressing New Variants: A Federal Perspective on the COVID-19 Response

View the [written testimony](#) from a hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions; Acting Commissioner Janet Woodcock, M.D. testifies for the FDA.

Dire Forecast From Health Officials: Most Of Us Will Get Covid

Acting FDA head Janet Woodcock told senators during a hearing Tuesday that "most people are going to get covid." Dr. Anthony Fauci repeated the [warning in an interview](#).

Federal Agencies Must Test Unvaccinated Workers

[The Washington Post](#) reports, “Federal agencies must start testing unvaccinated employees at least weekly for the coronavirus by Feb. 15, the Biden administration said in new guidance issued Tuesday. The testing, which mainly affects those exempted from President Biden’s vaccination mandate for federal workers, would be required during any week in which those employees ‘work onsite or interact in person with members of the public as part of their job duties,’ the guidance says.”

Provider Update

Which Fully Vaccinated Adults Are Most at Risk of Severe COVID?

Study examines which factors did, and didn't, play a role in risk. "A significant proportion of all fully vaccinated adults who died of COVID-19 had at least four risk factors associated with severe outcomes, researchers found." Read more on the [Medpage Today](#) website.

Death From COVID-19 Very Rare in Fully Vaccinated Adults

[Medscape Medical News](#) reports, "New research shows that adults who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 rarely die from the disease, although the odds of severe outcomes and death are higher in older adults and in those with compromised immune systems and underlying conditions."

Advancing COVID Vaccination Equity at Federally Qualified Health Centers

An article from the [Journal of General Internal Medicine](#) reports, "Equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination is crucial to mitigating disproportionate COVID-19 morbidity and mortality in lower-income minority communities in the USA. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are non-profit health systems that receive federal funding to provide primary care to medically underserved communities."

Health Experts Recommend Reporting Home COVID-19 Test Results

"Now, many health experts are encouraging people to report positive at-home tests to their state's public health agencies to help their area's pandemic response planning, which includes guidelines for contact tracing and mask-wearing." Learn more on the [CNBC website](#).

Switching to an N95 Mask Gives a 75x Boost in COVID Protection

"With the Omicron variant causing infections to surge to record levels, masking is more important than ever — and increasing evidence indicates the quality of mask makes a significant difference. The big picture: Fitted particle-filtering masks like N95s are up to 75 times more effective at preventing infection with COVID-19 than surgical masks, according to a study published recently in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences." Read more in an article on the [Axios website](#).

SARS-CoV-2 May Have Spread Faster, Sooner Than Previously Known

Two NIH-supported studies have found evidence of millions of undiagnosed cases of COVID-19 — some cases dating as far back as December 2019 — indicating that the SARS-CoV-2 virus was more widespread at an earlier date than previously thought. Visit the [NIH website](#) to learn more.

Resources

Enroll Your Facility into Operation Expanded Testing Today

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Operation Expanded Testing (OpET) program increases access to testing nationwide, especially for communities that have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. OpET provides no-cost testing to child care centers, K-12 schools, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), under-resourced communities, and congregate settings, such as homeless shelters, domestic violence and abuse shelters, non-federal correctional facilities, and other qualified sites. OpET can perform millions of tests through July 1, 2022. These contractor-provided laboratory services include specimen collection supplies, shipping materials, laboratory testing, and results reporting. The recipient sites contribute staff to collect specimens. Visit the [CDC website](#) to learn more.