

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 01/19/22

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.

Policy Updates

NHPCO Comments on Supreme Court Decision

On January 13, 2022, the Supreme Court issued its decision allowing the CMS vaccine mandate to go into effect for all states. [NHPCO issued the following comment](#) in response to the decision: “NHPCO has clearly supported the important role that CMS and HHS have in protecting the health and safety of consumers and health care providers. We supported and continue to support a vaccine mandate because we care about health care providers and the people and communities they serve. Today’s Supreme Court decision recognizes that role and gives health care providers the clarity that they need to assure that their staff members, and the people they care for, are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.”

Breaking News: CMS Vaccine Policy Now Enforceable in All 50 States

The federal COVID-19 vaccine mandate for health care workers can officially go into effect nationwide after a judge threw out a challenge to the mandate from Texas on Wednesday, January 19, 2022. A judge in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas granted a temporary block of the CMS requirement that employees at Medicare and Medicaid-certified facilities be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in Texas. But Texas moved to dismiss the case on Tuesday following the Supreme Court's decision to let the CMS enforce the mandate while appeals are considered at lower courts. It is unknown at this time about the deadlines for the first and second dose and whether they will be changed for Texas providers. Watch for updates from NHPCO on deadlines once they are announced.

Guidance for COVID-19 Mandate Implementation Following Supreme Court Ruling

On January 14, 2022, [CMS issued guidance](#) for the implementation of the Interim Final Rule - Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination, following the Supreme Court ruling lifting the injunction for 24 states listed in the Louisiana and Missouri lawsuits. Vaccination deadlines are different if your state was one that was a part of the lawsuits. NHPCO members can find the deadlines for their state on page 2-3 of the [January 18, 2022 Regulatory Alert](#). Note that CMS has directed surveyors for Texas providers not to proceed with implementation.

Public Health Emergency Renewed

HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra renewed the COVID-19 [public health emergency](#) effective January 16, 2022. NHPCO had written a letter to the administration requesting this extension.

Provider Updates

The Postal Service is Taking Orders for Free COVID-19 Test Kits

The U.S. Postal Service has begun taking orders for free at-home coronavirus test kits via [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov).

Resources

Pandemic Data Initiative Expert Forum: COVID Patient Data

The Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center is hosting the fourth [Pandemic Data Initiative Expert Forum](#) on Friday January 21 from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. ET. The Coronavirus Resource Center launched the Pandemic Data Initiative as a new resource to spotlight systemic deficiencies in the collecting and reporting of pandemic data, to examine how those challenges hinder COVID-19 responses, and to explore possible solutions to improve public data.