

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 02/05/21

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.

“There is always light. If only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.”

— Amanda Gorman

Policy Update

Four COVID-19 Updates From the White House

1. Community Vaccination Centers

Jeff Zients, COVID-19 Task Force Coordinator, noted that as part of the effort to establish and support community vaccination centers across the country, the Federal government is expediting financial support to bolster vaccination centers, deploying personnel to provide technical assistance and support to vaccination sites, and initiating new efforts to build new community vaccination centers across the country. The Federal government is partnering with the state of California to launch two new community vaccination centers in two communities that have been most hard hit by the virus - East Oakland and East Los Angeles. See [the recorded remarks](#).

2. Case Counts and the Superbowl

Dr. Walensky provided updates on case counts, noting that we are in a consistent downward trajectory for cases and hospitalizations and hope that there will be a correlating decline in deaths in the coming weeks. She also flagged the recently posted [guidance](#) on how to watch the Superbowl safely. Dr. Fauci spoke about the importance of the global effort to control the virus.

3. Explaining Community Immunity

When enough of the [community is immunized against a contagious disease](#), most other members are protected from infection because there's little opportunity for the disease to spread.

4. More on the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program

The [Federal Retail Pharmacy Program](#) for COVID-19 vaccination is a collaboration between the federal government, states and territories, and 21 national pharmacy partners and independent pharmacy networks to increase access to COVID-19 vaccination across the United States. This program is one component of the Federal government’s strategy to expand access to vaccines for the American public. The program is being implemented incrementally based on the available vaccine supply, with [select retail pharmacy locations providing COVID-19 vaccine](#) to eligible individuals. As vaccine availability increases over time, the program will expand to ultimately include all 40,000+ pharmacies. [View FAQs about the program](#).

ASPR Releases 2020 ASPR Year in Review

Following the HHS Secretary’s announcement of a nationwide [public health emergency](#) on January 31, 2020, ASPR spearheaded the development of an innovative COVID-19 medical countermeasure program; deployed

personnel to support quarantine facilities, hospitals, and healthcare facilities across the nation; and provided critical equipment to meet surge demands, save lives, and protect the American people from the virus. Learn more about [ASPR Takes Action to Protect the Nation from COVID-19 and Other Public Health Threats](#).

Provider Update

Articles of Interest from the U.S. Press

[COVID won't be last pathogen to threaten our national security](#) (USA Today, 2/4/21)

One year ago, the novel coronavirus upended our lives. Before we were able to reliably track the virus, the pandemic smashed through hospitals in Wuhan, Lombardy and New York City, leaving families grieving and healthcare workers devastated. We are now facing several new SARS-CoV2 variants of concern that have overwhelmed hospitals in the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Brazil. These variants will not be the last to emerge, just as the novel coronavirus will not be the last pathogen to threaten the national security of the United States.

[CDC: Wear Mask Fitters for Better COVID Protection](#) (Medscape, 2/1/21)

CDC officials emphasized the importance of wearing face masks that properly fit the face to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Mask fitters, which are small reusable devices that cinch a cloth or medical mask, can create a tighter fit against the face. "Fitters have been scientifically demonstrated to improve filtration performance by as much as 90% or more," John Brooks, MD, chief medical officer of the CDC's COVID-19 Response, said Friday during a media briefing with the Infectious Diseases Society of America.

[Moral Injury: Pandemic's Fallout for Healthcare Workers](#) (Medscape, 2/2/21)

In his 17 years as a doctor, Matthew Heinz, MD, had never gotten a telephone call like the one from his hospital in Tucson, Arizona. Late one night in December, a hospital supervisor called to tell him that five COVID patients were in distress. All of them needed a higher level of care, four of them urgently. But only one bed was available for the level of care they needed. "You pick," she told Heinz.

[100 Million Covid Shots in 100 Days Doesn't Get Us Back to Normal](#) (KHN, 2/3/21)

Whether it's 50 million or 60 million people who are fully inoculated by the end of April, that number is still well below the prevailing herd immunity threshold recommended by public health experts. Herd immunity is achieved when enough people in a population become resistant to a disease so that it has difficulty spreading. Epidemiologists estimate at least 70% of a population must be protected to reach herd immunity. Because it's unknown how long natural immunity lasts after being infected with the coronavirus, it's recommended that even those who have had COVID-19 be vaccinated to reach herd immunity. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has suggested the herd immunity benchmark could be higher, up to 90%, especially since it seems some new COVID-19 variants are more transmissible than the dominant U.S. strain.

[AstraZeneca Vaccine Cuts Covid Transmission, Booster Delay Works](#) (KHN, 2/3/21)

The latest research on the vaccine candidate produced by AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford finds that it was 76% effective at preventing infection after a single dose and that rate rises with a longer interval between the first and second doses.

[U.S. FDA gearing up for rapid review of potential COVID-19 booster shots](#) (Reuters, 2/4/21)

The FDA is planning a rapid review process for quick turnaround of new COVID-19 booster shots if variants of the coronavirus emerge against which the vaccines do not provide protection, the agency's top official said on Thursday.

Resources

Reminder to Sign up for V-Safe

Sponsored by the CDC, [V-safe](#) is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Through v-safe, you can quickly tell CDC if you have any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

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