

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 02/09/22

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: Medicare Coverage of OTC COVID-19 Tests Coming This Spring

CMS on Thursday, 02/03/22, announced it has identified a way to cover over-the-counter COVID-19 tests for Medicare beneficiaries and expects those in fee for service and Medicare Advantage will be able to access eight tests a month at no cost starting in the spring. Read the [CMS press release](#).

HHS Provides \$66.5 Million to Expand Community-Based Outreach Efforts

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), announced it is providing \$66.5 million in American Rescue Plan funding to eight grantees to expand outreach efforts in 38 states and the District of Columbia to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence and vaccinations. Read more on the [HHS website](#).

Provider Update

Future of Pandemic is Looking Clearer as We Learn More

National Public Radio reports, “During the early days of the pandemic, scientists and doctors were concerned that being infected with SARS-CoV-2 might not trigger a strong immune response in many people – thus an infection might not provide long-term protection.” It continues, “Now about a year and a half later, better data is painting a more optimistic picture about immunity after a bout of COVID-19. In fact, a symptomatic infection triggers a remarkable immune response in the general population, likely offering protection against severe disease and death for a few years.” Find this story on the [NPR website](#).

Covid Deaths Highest in a Year as Omicron Targets Unvaccinated and Elderly

[The Washington Post](#) reports, “Though considered milder than other coronavirus variants, omicron has infected so many people that it has driven the number of daily deaths beyond where it was last spring, before vaccines were widely available, according to Washington Post data. Omicron has been particularly lethal to people over 75, the unvaccinated and the medically vulnerable, according to doctors and public health officials. The soaring death toll also illustrates why experts pleaded with the public to beware of the highly contagious variant even though it is less virulent than others.”

Resources

Interactive Ventilation Tool from CDC

The CDC has created an online tool that can help a person determine how to decrease the level of virus particles during and after a guest visit in the home. Visit the CDC website to learn more about the [Interactive Ventilation Tool](#).

LAC22 Sessions to Help Providers Post-Pandemic

NHPCO's upcoming 2022 Leadership and Advocacy Conference will feature a track of education sessions focusing on navigating a post-pandemic world. Sessions available at the onsite conference, March 7 –9, include:

- *Doing More with Less? Innovate to Solve Nurse Shortages*
- *Essential Group/Team Building in Virtual Spaces*
- *Never Waste a Crisis: Making a Traveler Proof Program*
- *Volunteer Re-Engagement Post Pandemic: Best Practices*
- *Pandemic Aftermath: Navigating the Tides with your Team*
- *COVID-19 and CEO Turnover: What's a Hospice To Do?*

For those who are not able to join leaders from across the hospice and palliative care community, there is an on-demand option of conference content that will be available March 7 through May 31, 2022. Visit the LAC22 website to learn more about our live and on-demand sessions, look over the agenda, meet the keynotes, and review our robust health and safety guidelines. Register by February 11 to get the special conference hotel room rate for LAC22; and register by February 17 to save \$250 while standard registration rates are available. Visit nhpco.org/lac2022.