

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 04/26/21

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.

"The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today." – H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Policy Update

HHS Launches 'We Can Do This: Live' Initiative

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration's "We Can Do This" public education campaign to increase confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines and encourage vaccination, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is launching a new initiative today to connect Americans with facts and information on vaccines from doctors, scientists, and health professionals through high-impact digital platforms. [Learn more on the HHS website.](#)

Note: NHPCO is a participating organization in the "We Can Do This" public education campaign and encourages all providers to consider utilizing the [helpful resources](#) offered by the campaign.

Provider Update

Some Americans Skipping their Second Vaccine Shots

An [article on Axios](#) reports, "Over 5 million Americans have missed their second shots of the mRNA vaccines by Pfizer or Moderna, the New York Times reports, citing data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine effectiveness of partial immunization from Pfizer or Moderna — more than 14 days after the first dose, but before the second dose — was 80% in a recent CDC study of health care workers. Receiving just one shot 'triggers a weaker immune response and may leave recipients more susceptible to dangerous virus variants.'"

Some States Resume Use of J&J Vaccine

The [Associated Press reports](#), "With a green light from federal health officials, many states resumed use of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine on Saturday. Among the other states ordering or recommending a resumption, along with Indiana, were Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia."

New U.S. Cases Still at a 'Precarious' Level Amid Slowing Vaccination Rates

[The Washington Post](#) reports, "Anthony S. Fauci, warned Americans that a rate of 50,000 new coronavirus infections a day is still too high and urged people to get vaccinated. The U.S. vaccination program has shown signs of slowing in recent days even as the numbers of new cases remain flat or are increasing in places. Vaccination rates vary from 31.5 percent of people in Alabama having received at least one dose up to 52 percent in Maine."

Vaccinating Homebound Patients Is an Uphill Battle

[Medscape reports](#), "There are about 2 million to 4 million homebound patients in the United States, according to a webinar from the Trust for America's Health, which was broadcast in March. But many of these individuals have not been vaccinated yet because of logistical challenges."

Resources

CMS Snapshot of Impact of COVID-19 on Medicare Population

CMS released its monthly update of data that provides a snapshot of the impact of COVID-19 on the Medicare population. The updated data show over 3.8 million COVID-19 cases among the Medicare population and over 1 million COVID-19 hospitalizations. The updated snapshot covers the period from January 1, 2020 to February 20, 2021. It is based on Medicare Fee-for-Service claims and Medicare Advantage encounter data CMS received by March 19, 2021. The updated snapshot also incorporates an improved approach for calculating COVID-19 case and hospitalization rates per 100,000 using average monthly enrollment; additional details are included in the methodology document. View the [updated snapshot](#) on the CMS website.

It's Complicated: Death, Grief, and COVID-19

An article made available by Dordt University describes that ways that COVID-19 has inherently made grief more complicated. Many public mourning rituals have been postponed or canceled altogether—or if a funeral or memorial service was permitted, the number of people in attendance were significantly limited. We all know funerals and memorials are for the living, so what does it mean to the survivor when they are unable to attend those rituals? Many people are dying alone for fear of increased exposure to the healthy. The survivors are not only unable to hold normal public grieving rituals, but also miss out on the opportunity to sit with the dying person in their final days and hours. For the sick and sometimes dying, this means long periods of disconnection and loneliness as they try to recover and recuperate. Death is always a unique experience. [Download a PDF of this article.](#)

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