

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 05/17/21

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.

“Your imagination is your preview of life’s coming attractions.” – Albert Einstein

Policy Update

HHS Awards \$40 Million in American Rescue Plan Funding to Support Emergency Home Visiting Assistance for Families Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic

On May 11, in recognition of National Women’s Health Week, and thanks to the American Rescue Plan, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Health Resources and Services Administration, awarded approximately \$40 million in emergency home visiting funds to states, territories, and the District of Columbia to support children and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program supports the delivery of coordinated and comprehensive, high quality, voluntary, evidence-based home visiting services to children and families living in communities at risk for poor maternal and child health outcomes. See the [HHS press release](#) to learn more.

CMS Expanding Efforts to Grow COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence and Uptake Amongst the Vulnerable

As part of the ongoing response to address the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve health care access and reduce the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, CMS issued a rule that will ensure long-term care facilities, and residential facilities serving clients with intellectual disabilities, educate and offer the COVID-19 vaccine to residents, clients, and staff. These requirements apply to Long-Term Care facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICFs-IID) and align with existing requirements for influenza and pneumococcal vaccines in LTC facilities. See the [CMS press release](#) for more information.

Provider Update

CDC Director Says Mask Turnaround Based Solely on Science

As reported by [the Associated Press](#), “The head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Sunday defended the decision to ease mask-wearing guidance for fully vaccinated people, stressing that increasing political pressure had nothing to do with the abrupt shift in guidelines. To date more than 156 million Americans, or more than 47% of the population, have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and more than 121 million are fully vaccinated.”

Experts are Warning About the Unintended Consequences of CDC Mask Guidance

[CNN reports](#), “The agency said Thursday fully vaccinated Americans don't need to wear masks or social distance indoors or outdoors, with some exceptions, triggering announcements nationwide from state leaders and businesses who lifted their mask requirements for people who've gotten their Covid-19 shots. But with a big part of the country still unvaccinated, some experts say the move came too fast and has resulted in many more Americans now shedding their masks than the CDC recommended.”

Fauci Says Pandemic Exposed ‘Undeniable Effects of Racism’

“The immunologist who leads the COVID-19 response in the United States said Sunday that ‘the undeniable effects of racism’ have led to unacceptable health disparities that especially hurt African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans during the pandemic.” Visit the [Associated Press website](#) to see the full article.

Coronavirus Variant First Found in India Discovered in Maine

[The Bangor Daily News](#) reports, “A coronavirus variant first detected in India has been discovered in Maine. While health officials here consider it a ‘variant of interest’, Public Health England recently reclassified B.1.617.2 as a ‘variant of concern’ because it has an estimated rate of transmissibility at least as high as that of the B.1.1.7 (UK) variant. In late March, the National Institutes of Health said the UK variant likely accounted for at least one-third of all cases in the U.S. at the time.”

Virus Variant First Identified in India Found in Nebraska

Similarly, [the Association Press](#) reports, “Nebraska health officials said an extremely contagious variant of the coronavirus that was first identified in India has been confirmed in the state. The first case of the virus variant, officially known as the B.1.617 variant, was found in a Lancaster County resident who has ties to international travelers.”

Resources

A Physician Confronts Family Caregiving During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Lynn Hallarman, MD, writes in JAMA Neurology, “My mother died as the COVID-19 pandemic raced across the nation with wildfire ferocity. At age 92 years, she was frail and living with advancing dementia. Until the pandemic took hold, upending my mother’s life, I was the first-response daughter who lived closest to her 2-bedroom apartment. With New York on the verge of lockdown, we played out our options—uprooting Mom from her native New York vs our fear of her remaining in place and contracting COVID-19. Our family ultimately decided to move Mom near my middle sister in New Hampshire, a state relatively untouched by COVID-19. Our hope was to avoid caregiving chaos during a pandemic and to protect our mother from contracting the virus. Read the rest of Dr. Hallarman’s article on the [JAMA website](#).”

NAACP Launches ‘COVID. KNOW MORE’

Today, the NAACP has launched an innovative, timely new initiative empowering Black Americans with the latest information, resources, and updates on COVID-19 with the intent of providing to Black Americans the most comprehensive suite of relevant information and resources on COVID-19 available, curated specifically for them. The mainstay of the NAACP’s ‘COVID. KNOW MORE’ effort is a multifaceted online information hub housing a broad array of features designed to empower African Americans’ decision making as they navigate the pandemic—at their own convenience. The new online hub can be accessed at naacp.org/covidknowmore. The platform further reinforces the NAACP as the most visible and trusted resource for African Americans on the health crisis.

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