

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 07/14/21

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.

“Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny...” – C.S. Lewis

Policy Updates

Provider Relief Funds Reporting Requirements and Resources

As previously reported, on June 11, 2021, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) issued [guidance for reporting the use of Provider Relief Funds](#). The [PRF Reporting Portal](#) went live on July 1, 2021 and is now open to recipients who received PRF funds between April 10, 2020 and June 30, 2020 (Reporting Period 1). Providers who received funds during this period will have until September 30, 2021 to file their reports. HRSA has issued a number of new resources on reporting, including a toolkit and a fact sheet, as well as the ongoing FAQs document. HRS is also holding a series of webinars on reporting. NHPCO members will find a Policy Alert (07/09/21) available on the [Alerts & Updates](#) page of the website for additional information and links.

Provider Update

CDC Sees 'New and Concerning Trends' With Delta Variant

[WebMD Health News](#) reports, “The Delta coronavirus strain, now the dominant variant of COVID-19 in the United States, is surging in areas of the country with low vaccination rates per the CDC. In areas of the Midwest and some Mountain States, the variant accounts for 80% of cases. National numbers reflect this rise. There was an 11% increase in cases this week from the prior 7-day average.”

New Study on Delta Variant

An article in [The Washington Post](#) reports, “New laboratory research on the swiftly spreading delta variant of the coronavirus is highlighting the threats posed by viral mutations, adding urgency to calls to accelerate vaccination efforts across the planet. A peer-reviewed report from scientists in France, published Thursday in the journal *Nature*, found that the delta variant has mutations that allow it to evade some of the neutralizing antibodies produced by vaccines or by a natural infection. A single shot of a two-dose vaccine “barely” offers any protection, researchers reported. But the experiments found that fully vaccinated people — with the recommended regimen of two shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca vaccine — should retain significant protection against the delta variant. That echoes another report written by a collaboration of scientists in the United States and published Wednesday in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.” (*The Washington Post website requires a subscription after a certain number of articles have been accessed.*)

FDA Update

As part of the FDA's effort to protect consumers, the agency issued warning letters to 12 firms for offering for sale in the U.S. adulterated and misbranded tests, face masks, respirators and surgical masks, some of which are intended for use in the mitigation, prevention, treatment, diagnosis or cure of COVID-19 in people. Consumers concerned about COVID-19 should consult with their health care provider. See [FDA webpage](#) for list of vendors.

Medical Coalition Endorses Vaccine Mandates for Healthcare Workers

A group of six medical organizations has put out a statement urging hospitals and other healthcare facilities to mandate COVID-19 vaccines as a condition of employment for their workers. Read more on the [Medscape website](#).

Resources

Joint CDC and FDA Statement on Vaccine Boosters

Americans who have been fully vaccinated do not need a booster shot at this time. FDA, CDC, and NIH are engaged in a science-based, rigorous process to consider whether or when a booster might be necessary. This process takes into account laboratory data, clinical trial data, and cohort data – which can include data from specific pharmaceutical companies but does not rely on those data exclusively. We continue to review any new data as it becomes available and will keep the public informed. We are prepared for booster doses if and when the science demonstrates that they are needed. [Read the press announcement](#) on the FDA website.

Influence of COVID-19 Visitation Restrictions on Patient Experience and Safety Outcomes

An article available on the [Patient Safety Network website](#) reports, "Research has found that families and caregivers play a key role in identifying and preventing patient safety events. Based on a national sample of hospitals, this study explored the impact of hospital visitation restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic on patient experience and safety outcomes. Results indicate that hospitals with closed visitations experienced larger performance deficits across measures of medical staff responsiveness, fall rates, and sepsis rates."

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There is still time to register for the [2021 Virtual Conference](#) that will focus on healthcare transformation. A timely topic given the experience of the past year.