

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 08/11/21

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.

“A bend in the road is not the end of the road... unless you fail to make the turn.” – Helen Keller

Provider Update

U.S. Averaging 100,000 New COVID-19 Infections a Day

[The Associated Press reports](#), “The COVID-19 outbreak in the United States crossed 100,000 new confirmed daily infections Saturday, a milestone last exceeded during the winter surge and driven by the highly transmissible delta variant and low vaccination rates in the South. ‘Our models show that if we don’t (vaccinate people), we could be up to several hundred thousand cases a day, similar to our surge in early January,’ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Rochelle Walensky said on CNN this week. Hospitalizations and deaths are also increasing, though all are still below peaks seen early this year before vaccines became widely available. More than 44,000 Americans are currently hospitalized with COVID-19, according to the CDC, up 30% in a week and nearly four times the number in June. More than 120,000 were hospitalized in January.”

Beyond Delta, Scientists are Watching New Coronavirus Variants

“The continued spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has spawned a Greek alphabet of variants - a naming system used by the World Health Organization to track concerning new mutations of the virus that causes COVID-19. Some have equipped the virus with better ways of infecting humans or evading vaccine protection. Scientists remain focused on Delta, now the dominant variant rising rapidly around the world, but are tracking others to see what may one day take its place.” Read more in this article available on the [Reuters website](#).

COVID-19 Vaccine Could See Full FDA Approval Within Weeks

In an article published on [WebMD Health News](#), Carolyn Crist writes, “The FDA could fully approve Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine by the end of August. The Biden administration has said that the federal government won’t mandate vaccines beyond the federal workforce, according to The Associated Press, but White House officials have encouraged state and local governments and businesses to consider vaccine mandates.”

FDA Expected to Recommend Boosters for Immunocompromised Americans

[ABC News reports](#), “Within the next few weeks, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is expected to recommend a plan for immunocompromised Americans to get a COVID-19 booster shot. Last month, experts on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s advisory panel were largely supportive of giving those people a third dose to boost their immunity and called on the FDA to move on the issue.”

New COVID Cases Among Children Far Outpace Vaccinations

Richard Franki in [Medscape Medical News](#) writes, “New COVID-19 cases in children soared by almost 86% over the course of just 1 week, while the number of 12- to 17-year-old children who have received at least one dose of vaccine rose by 5.4%, according to two separate sources. Children represented 19.0% of the cases reported during the week of July 23-29, and they have made up 14.3% of all cases since the pandemic began, with the total number of cases in children now approaching 4.2 million, the AAP and CHA said in their weekly COVID report. About 22% of the US population is under the age of 18 years.”

Resources

Article: Dying Alone during a Pandemic

An article of interest was published by the [Journal of Palliative Medicine](#), “Dying Alone during a Pandemic,” and is available for download. The authors present a case illustration of the impacts of this unprecedented healthcare response that in many hospitals and health care facilities had a negative impact on patient and family caregivers’ wellbeing as well as moral distress for staff. In the conclusion, the authors write, “Health care facilities should make efforts to maintain balance between safety precautions and minimizing potential negative impacts on patients, families, and staff by implementing innovative measures to support ongoing communication and access to family support.”

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2021 Interdisciplinary Conference Transitions to Virtual Event

With safety a priority, NHPCO has announced that the [2021 Interdisciplinary Conference](#) will be an entirely virtual event. While the opportunity to gather as a provider community will be missed, the IDC21 will offer a robust, virtual professional development experience. Online registration is being updated and will be available soon.