

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 09/29/21

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.

“Sometimes carrying on, just carrying on, is the superhuman achievement.”
– Albert Camus

Policy Updates

Provider Relief Funding Phase 4

Beginning September 29, 2021, providers can apply for Phase 4 payments from the Provider Relief Fund, with application submission through the [Provider Relief Application and Attestation Portal](#). Providers must submit their completed application by the final deadline of October 26 at 11:59 p.m. ET. Providers who have not previously created an account will need to create one. NHPCO members can download a [Policy Alert](#) (09/29/21) with more details and links to information.

FDA Authorizes Booster Dose of Pfizer Vaccine for Certain Populations

U.S. Food and Drug Administration amended the emergency use authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine to allow for use of a single booster dose, to be administered at least six months after completion of the primary series in:

- individuals 65 years of age and older;
- individuals 18 through 64 years of age at high risk of severe COVID-19; and
- individuals 18 through 64 years of age whose frequent institutional or occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2 puts them at high risk of serious complications of COVID-19 including severe COVID-19.

This authorization applies only to the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Read the [FDA press announcement](#).

NIAID Issues New Awards to Fund “Pan-Coronavirus” Vaccines

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, has awarded approximately \$36.3 million to three academic institutions to conduct research to develop vaccines to protect against multiple types of coronaviruses and viral variants. The awards are intended to fuel vaccine research for a diverse family of coronaviruses, with a primary focus on potential pandemic-causing coronaviruses, such as SARS-CoV-2. Learn more on the [NIH website](#).

Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities—Before and During the Pandemic

News headlines during the pandemic have highlighted the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 across certain racial and ethnic groups in the United States. Available data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show disparities in everything from testing and vaccination rates to cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. For example, as of July, American Indian/Alaska Native people died from COVID-19 at a rate 2.8 times higher than White people, when taking age into account. Learn more on the [GAO website](#).

Provider Update

U.S. Daily COVID-19 Cases Drop, But Death Toll Rises

[CNBC reports](#), “The U.S. average for new COVID-19 cases has declined to about 135,000 over the past week, down 18% from the start of September, and hospitalizations have also decreased to 91,500, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. The weekly average for reported COVID-19 deaths, however, climbed 13% from the prior week to 2,031, the highest daily average since March.”

Pfizer Begins Study of Oral Drug for Prevention of COVID-19

[Reuters Health News](#) reports, “Pfizer Inc said on Monday it has started a mid-to-late-stage study testing its investigational oral antiviral drug for the prevention of COVID-19 infection among those who have been exposed to the virus.”

Children and COVID: New Cases Topped 200,000 After 3 Weeks of Declines

“Weekly COVID-19 cases in children dropped again, but the count remained above 200,000 for the fifth consecutive week, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association. Over that 5-week span since the end of August, in fact, the United States has added over 1.13 million new cases, or just under 20% of all cases (5.7 million) in children during the entire pandemic, based on the data in the AAP/CHA joint weekly report on COVID in children.” Visit the [Medscape website](#) to learn more.

Pfizer to Request COVID-19 Vaccine Approval for Kids

An article on the [WebMD website](#) reports, “Pfizer-BioNTech plans to ask for authorization of its COVID-19 vaccine for kids under 12 soon, which could make the shot available to ages 5-11 this fall.”

Pfizer Begins Study of Oral Drug for Prevention of COVID-19

[Reuters reports](#), “Pfizer Inc said on Monday it has started a mid-to-late-stage study testing its investigational oral antiviral drug for the prevention of COVID-19 infection among those who have been exposed to the virus. The company and its rivals, including U.S.-based Merck & Co Inc and Swiss pharmaceutical Roche Holding AG, have been racing to develop the first antiviral pill for COVID-19.”

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