

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



### NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 12/23/20

NHPCO offices will be closed for the holiday and reopen on January 4, 2021. If there is important news regarding COVID-19, we will share that but otherwise, look for the next Update to come in 2021. Happy holidays.

**“There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.” – John Holmes**

### Policy Update

#### **Consolidated Appropriations Act Includes Hospice Provisions**

On Monday, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 133) was passed by Congress. The legislation combined an omnibus spending bill, COVID-related provisions, and included hospice provisions such as the Rural Access to Hospice Act, the HOSPICE Act, and sequestration relief. [Read more in NHPCO’s press release](#). NHPCO Members can find a more detailed analysis in yesterday’s [policy alert](#) (12/22/20). The alert can be found in the Regulatory Alerts and Updates section of the website.

### Provider Update

#### **US COVID-19 Cases Top 18 Million**

[CNN reports](#) that the number of reported COVID-19 cases in the US crossed the 18 million mark Monday, while the total number of deaths climbed to more than 319,000, as the country starts administering the second COVID-19 vaccine authorized for emergency use by the FDA. CDC data shows over 614,000 Americans had been vaccinated against the disease as of Monday.

#### **NICE Issues Rapid Guideline on Long COVID**

People may have ongoing symptomatic COVID-19 if they present with symptoms 4 to 12 weeks after the start of acute symptoms, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has said. People may have post-COVID syndrome if their symptoms have not resolved after 12 weeks, it added. The [rapid guideline](#) on managing the long-term effects of COVID-19, also known as 'long COVID', was produced by NICE in collaboration with the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP). Learn more on the [Medscape website](#).

#### **Federal Panel on Who Should be Next for Coronavirus Vaccine**

Grocery store workers, day-care employees and other people on the front lines of America’s workforce, along with adults over 75, should be next to receive priority for the shots, according to a recommendation that state officials will use to make decisions about distributing limited vaccine supplies. Read this article in [The Washington Post](#) (12/20/20) for additional information.

#### **Different COVID-19 Vaccines**

[CDC will provide information](#) on who is and is not recommended to receive each vaccine and what to expect after vaccination, as well as ingredients, safety, and effectiveness.

## **Resources**

### **CMS - COVID-19: Stress & Resilience, Crisis Standards of Care**

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) released an [Express message](#) with new resources:

- [COVID-19 and Healthcare Stress and Resilience](#) Exchange Issue 12.
- [Crisis Standards of Care and COVID-19: What's Working and What Isn't](#) webinar: Clinical consultation versus triage support, systems-level information sharing, and planning resources.
- [Support for Overstretched Clinicians during the Ongoing Pandemic](#): Programs for staff.

### **Caring for Dying Patients at the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

An article in the journal *Anthropology in Action*, explores how intimacy both was and was not established at the height of the pandemic, and it describes the extent to which shared concerns functioned as a new means to create a sense of a common experience. Palliative care professionals often speak of the importance of forming meaningful relationships with patients and their families. Trust and rapport, usually established over extended periods of time through face-to-face interactions, and a 'gentle honesty' regarding end-of-life and death are key aspects of developing a sense of intimacy with people who are approaching the end of their lives. A fundamental feature of this intimacy is conveying a sense of 'being with' a patient. However, these ways of working were greatly challenged by the impact of COVID-19. Read "[Ways of 'Being With': Caring for Dying Patients at the Height of the COVID-19 Pandemic.](#)"