

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 07/29/20

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links.

“When you come out of the storm, you won’t be the same person who walked in. That’s what this storm’s all about.” — Haruki Murakami

Policy

Congress Continues to Work on COVID-19 Legislative Package

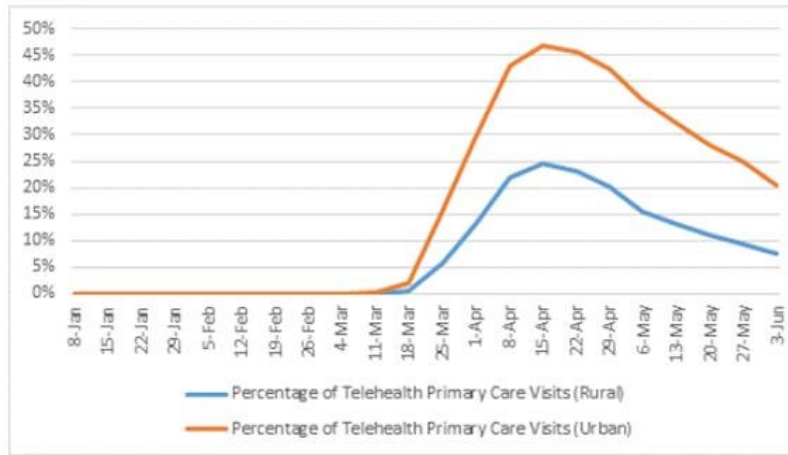
Senate Republicans introduced the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection, and Schools (HEALS) Act on July 27, 2020. This is a roughly \$1 trillion package as of right now, but the scope and scale of the bill will change over the course of negotiations. As it stands now, some of the relevant provisions of the HEALS Act include employer tax relief, provisions addressing the federal stockpile, diagnostic testing, telehealth, and surveillance; liability protections for health care providers; [\\$190b for additional loans to small businesses](#) (redefining eligibility from 500 employees to 300 employees); \$105b for schools and education, and an additional \$118.4b for HHS.

The specific provisions of a passable next COVID-19 relief package remain unclear, as the parties are still far apart in their negotiations. As a stop-gap measure, President Trump and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin have proposed a smaller bill which would provide a short-term extension of supplemental unemployment insurance, and a moratorium on evictions, while leaving many of the other issues at hand unresolved. NHPCO will keep you informed as negotiations continue.

HHS Issues New Report Highlighting Dramatic Trends in Medicare Beneficiary Telehealth Utilization amid COVID-19

HHS, through the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, is releasing a [new report showing the dramatic utilization trends of telehealth services for primary care delivery in Fee-for-Service \(FFS\) Medicare](#) in the early days of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The report analyzes claims data from January through early June. The report underscores how telehealth flexibilities, introduced by the Trump Administration to address the care delivery disruptions caused by the pandemic, helped to spur and maintain Medicare beneficiaries' access to their primary care providers.

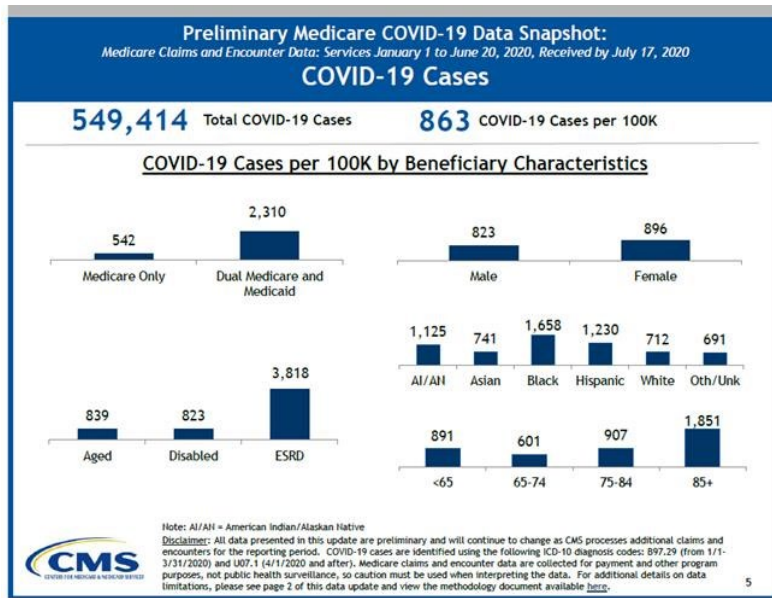
Figure 4. Telehealth Weekly Visits as a Percentage of Total FFS Medicare Primary Care Visits in Urban and Rural Counties



Source: Medicare claims data up to June 3rd, available as of June 16.

CMS Updates Data on COVID-19 Impacts on Medicare Beneficiaries

CMS released its [first monthly update of data that provides a snapshot of the impact of COVID-19 on the Medicare population](#). For the first time, the snapshot includes data for American Indian/Alaskan Native Medicare beneficiaries. The new data indicate that American Indian/Alaskan Native beneficiaries have the second highest rate of hospitalization for COVID-19 among racial/ethnic groups after Blacks. Previously, the number of hospitalizations of American Indian/Alaskan Native beneficiaries was too low to be reported.



Providers

NHPCO Revises COVID-19 Illness Tracking Form for Employees Reporting Symptoms/Exposure

We revised our [COVID-19 Illness Tracking Form for Employees Reporting Symptoms/Exposure](#) to include updated guidance from the CDC.

Guidance on the Role of Hospice Services in LTC Facilities During COVID-19 Pandemic – ASPR Tracie

Collaborative document by the American Health Care Association, National Center for Assisted Living, and National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization. (2020). [This joint document](#) provides guidance on the risk-benefit analysis between implementing strong infection prevention measures and the best interests of LTC residents.

FDA Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Resources for Health Professionals

[This page contains key resources](#) for health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic such as PPE updates and product warnings.

Resources

CDC Health Equality Information

Check out the [CDC's Health Equality webpage](#) which includes helpful information about health equality and disparities as well as the [CDC COVID-19 Response Health Equity Strategy](#)

Ingraining Equity into Quality and Safety: A System-Wide Strategy - By IHI Multimedia Team

COVID-19's disparate health effects among racial and ethnic groups and the recent civil unrest following the brutal killings of George Floyd and many others have helped our nation focus on health and racial inequities as never before. Given the gravitas of this work and our experience, [we propose a comprehensive 4-step strategy](#) that health systems can utilize to ingrain equity into quality and safety work.