

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 08/19/2020

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

"Believe you can and you're halfway there." -Theodore Roosevelt

Policy

CMS Announces Resumption of Routine Inspections of All Provider and Suppliers

CMS announced it will resume routine inspections of all Medicare and Medicaid certified providers and suppliers to improve the safety and quality of life of patients and residents. CMS had previously suspended certain routine inspections as part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic to prioritize infection control and immediate jeopardy situations and to give health care providers and suppliers time needed to respond to the spread of COVID-19. CMS has confirmed that this applies to all Medicare provider types, including hospice providers.

Resumption of Onsite Revisit, Non-Immediate Jeopardy Complaint, and Annual Recertification Surveys

In the [guidance released on August 17](#), CMS directed the resumption of onsite revisit surveys, non-immediate jeopardy complaint surveys and annual recertification surveys as soon as resources are available. In addition, [CMS is providing guidance on resolving enforcement cases](#) that were previously on hold because of survey prioritization changes. The agency will also temporarily expand the desk review policy, when state surveyors ensure that facilities return back into compliance with Federal requirements without an onsite survey, to include all noncompliance reviews except for immediate jeopardy citations that have not been removed.

Internal Pressure on Speaker Pelosi, McConnell Circulates Skinny HEALS Act

This Saturday, Speaker Nancy Pelosi will recall members of House from their home districts despite August Recess for a vote on legislation to secure and defend the Postal Service. Though Speaker Pelosi has publicly opposed passing a narrower version of COVID-19 relief in the past, she is now being pressured by some in her caucus to use this opportunity to also pass a slimmed down version of the HEROES Act. Senior leadership, though, have expressed concern that there is not consensus about which relief measures to include in this smaller bill.

Meanwhile, as reported yesterday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is circulating a similarly narrow version of the Republican COVID-19 relief bill, the HEALS Act. This version, the [Delivering Immediate Relief to America's Families, Schools, and Small Businesses Act](#), would provide liability relief, \$300 in federal unemployment benefits, an extension and modification of the PPP, and funding for the Postal Service. Though some senate Republicans in swing districts would like to see a bill move, it is unlikely that this bill would come up for a vote before September.

Providers

Risk of Inaccurate Results with Thermo Fisher Scientific TaqPath COVID-19 Combo Kit

FDA is alerting clinical laboratory staff and health care providers of a risk of false results with Thermo Fisher Scientific TaqPath COVID-19 Combo Kit based on two issues related to the test kit and the associated Applied Biosystems COVID-19 Interpretive Software. [Read the full story.](#)

Why Is “Psychological PPE” Important for the Health Care Workforce?

IHI [developed](#) some recommended evidence-based “[psychological PPE](#)” — individual and system-level actions to safeguard and support the mental health and well-being of the health care workforce. On the recent [IHI Virtual Learning Hour Special Series: Psychological Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#), presented in partnership with Well Being Trust, guest panelists discussed the actions leaders can take to support staff, reduce fear and anxiety, promote psychological safety, and facilitate peer support and connections.

CISA tracking phishing activity

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) is tracking an unknown malicious cyber actor spoofing the Small Business Administration (SBA) COVID-19 loan relief webpage through phishing emails. These emails include a malicious link to the spoofed SBA website being used for malicious re-directs and credential stealing. Small business owners and organizations at all levels should review the alert and apply the recommended mitigations to strengthen the security posture of their systems. [Read the full alert for additional technical details.](#)

Resources

CDC COVID-19 Response Promising Practices in Health Equity II Webinar

The effects of COVID-19 on the health of racial and ethnic minority groups is still emerging; however, current data suggest a disproportionate burden of illness and death among these groups. [Presenters from local jurisdictions and national organizations](#) discussed actions taken to mitigate the disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minorities. Presenters discussed strategies to reduce COVID-19 health inequities for racial and ethnic minorities at the local, state, and national level. This content and conclusions are those of the author and presenter and do not necessarily represent the views of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.