

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 09/16/20

NHPCO has created this update for hospice and palliative care providers to share recent news and helpful links. Please note, these Updates are published when there is helpful news to share.

“Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile.” — Albert Einstein

Policy Update

Problem Solvers Caucus COVID Bill Dead on Arrival

Yesterday, members of the House Problem Solvers Caucus, a group of moderate members of both parties, [proposed a COVID-19 relief package](#) designed to provide a compromise solution which would break the stalemate in Washington and allow the passage of a new bill. This bipartisan proposal includes approximately \$1.5 trillion in funding, including \$120 billion in enhanced unemployment benefits, \$500 billion in state and local aid, additional funding for the paycheck protection program, \$145 Billion for schools and childcare providers, \$100 billion for additional COVID-19 testing and contract tracing, and \$280 for a second round of stimulus checks. The bill also addresses liability protection reform, which has been a sticking point for Republican leadership attempting to negotiate a deal.

Despite the bipartisan effort, House leadership has indicated that this framework does not go far enough, and senators on both sides of the aisle have said this proposal would not pass the senate. Regardless, this proposal is designed to bring negotiators back to the table. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has said she wants the House to remain in session until an agreement is reached.

NHPCO Requests Money and Equipment for Testing

On September 15, NHPCO sent a [letter to HHS Secretary Alex Azar](#) requesting \$500 million in funding for hospices to do testing, along with requests for testing equipment and testing supplies. This letter is our second request to the Administration to provide COVID-19 testing equipment and supplies for hospice providers. NHPCO states that “we have heard from many state hospice and palliative care organizations and countless hospices across the nation that the need for immediate support to expand hospice testing capacity continues to grow to prevent the spread of this deadly virus. In addition to the need for additional funds, hospices also need the Administration’s assistance with the acquisition of testing supplies which are in very limited supply when available at all.” The letter linked above includes NHPCO’s letter of July 27, 2020.

HHS Releases Plan for COVID-19 Vaccine

Today, the Administration announced a plan for distributing and administering a COVID-19 vaccine once one becomes available. The [Report to Congress](#) includes an overall strategy an operational [playbook for states](#). The plan discusses plans for centrally distributing the vaccine; the role of state and local governments; how they will prioritize populations; a justification for robust communications; and the plan for monitoring vaccine distribution and administration in real-time.

Provider Update

CDC - N95 and Other Respirators Information Updated

The [N95 and Other Respirators](#) webpage for healthcare workers has been updated as of 9/16/20.

Implementing Safety Practices for Potentially Exposed Critical Infrastructure Workers

CDC updated [guidance for critical workers](#) on how to protect workers who may have been exposed to COVID-19. To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community.

Unapproved Products with Fraudulent COVID-19 Claims

As part of the FDA's effort to protect consumers, the agency issued a warning letter jointly with the Federal Trade Commission to [Pharmacy Plus, Inc. dba Vital Care Compounder](#) for selling unapproved products with fraudulent COVID-19 claims. The company sells "COVID PACK" and "COVID 'POSITIVE' PACK" products with misleading claims that the products can mitigate, prevent, treat, diagnose, or cure COVID-19 in people. There are currently no FDA-approved products to prevent or treat COVID-19. FDA requested that Pharmacy Plus, Inc. dba Vital Care Compounder immediately stop selling these unapproved and unauthorized products. Consumers concerned about COVID-19 should consult with their health care provider.

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