

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



NHPCO COVID-19 Update – 09/30/20

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.

“People who wonder whether the glass is half empty or half full miss the point. The glass is refillable.” – Simon Sinek

Policy Update

CMS Announces Update to Rate of COVID-19 Testing for Nursing Homes

On September 29, 2020, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced an [update to the methodology](#) the agency employs to determine the rate of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) positivity in counties across the country.

- Counties with 20 or fewer tests over 14 days will now move to “green” in the color-coded system of assessing COVID-19 community prevalence.
- Counties with both fewer than 500 tests and fewer than 2,000 tests per 100,000 residents, and greater than 10 percent positivity over 14 days – which would have been “red” under the previous methodology – will move to “yellow.”

This information is critical to nursing homes, which are required to test their staff for COVID-19 at a frequency based on the positivity rate of their respective counties. This change means that counties that previously were required to test once a week will now only need to test once a month if there were 20 or fewer tests conducted over 14 days. Counties previously required to test twice a week will now only need to test once a week if they conducted both fewer than 500 tests and fewer than 2,000 tests per 100,000 residents, and greater than 10% positivity over 14 days.

CMS Issues New Emergency Preparedness Testing Exemption and Guidance

On September 28, 2020, CMS issued [specific guidance](#) for Emergency Preparedness testing requirements – COVID-19. During or after an actual emergency, the regulations allow for an exemption to the testing requirements based on real world actions taken by providers and suppliers. A worksheet has also been developed which presents guidance for surveyors, as well as providers and suppliers, with relevant scenarios on meeting the testing requirements in light of many of the response activities associated with the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE).

Provider Update

Recent Increase in COVID-19 Cases Reported Among Adults Aged 18–22 Years

During August 2–September 5, 2020, weekly COVID-19 cases among persons aged 18–22 years increased 55% nationally. Increases were greatest in the Northeast (144%) and Midwest (123%). Increases in cases were not solely attributable to increased testing. [Read the report](#) on the CDC website.

Resources

Lessons From COVID-19 About Rationing Care (Jama Forum, 9/24/20)

The US health care system prioritizes acute and intensive care at the expense of supporting people to die with respect, comfort, and the love of family and friends. Although states can offer policies that foster more accessible palliative and end-of-life care, frontline clinicians may need to advocate for supporting family caregivers to provide the last hours of care to their loved ones with the resources they need to do so. Read the article on the [JAMA Network website](#).

Pandemic Leadership Lessons for Any Organization

In a new book Michael Dowling has co-authored with Charles Kenney, *Leading Through a Pandemic: The Inside Story of Humanity, Innovation, and Lessons Learned During the COVID-19 Crisis*, Dowling shares hard-won leadership lessons. While Northwell is New York's largest health system, many of the lessons Dowling and his team learned can be applied by any organization in any health care setting in the world. Visit the IHI website for [some of the key lessons](#) Dowling shared in a recent interview.

How to Respond to Ethical Challenges and Moral Distress during the COVID-19 Pandemic

You know the physical threat that COVID-19 presents to your patients and to you. The less recognized and acknowledged challenges are the ethical dilemmas that this crisis poses and the moral distress that follows. A free on-demand program from the ANA COVID-19 webinar series is available. [Register for this webinar](#) or all three webinars in the ANA COVID-19 series.

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