

The Academy Weekly

News & Information for LTC Providers



The Academy of Senior Health Sciences, Inc.
www.seniorhealthsciences.org

Week of 15 August 2021

Ohio News

[State aware of provider concerns over vaccine mandate](#)

[ODH is monitoring vaccine booster status; distributed info for vaccine providers](#)

[Save the date: ASHS Fall Conference Dec 9 and 10](#)

National News

[CMS to mandate vaccine for NH staff](#)

[Pfizer vaccine receives full FDA approval](#)

[CMS MLN Connects](#)

Ohio News

State aware of provider concerns over vaccine mandate

CMS's vaccination mandate for nursing home staff has garnered both national and local attention. (See [related article in the National News section.](#)) Of primary concern to providers is the ability to maintain staffing levels given the already tight labor market. Some NH providers were already heading in the direction of mandating the vaccine with a target date as early as October 1. Despite a lot of education and incentives for staff, even providers that created their own vaccination policy are having difficulty reaching 100% vaccination. Furthermore, while the federal mandate has created a level playing field for the vaccine requirement among nursing home providers, there are still other LTSS jobs nursing home staff can turn to that do not currently require the vaccine. The Academy has made the state aware of provider concerns related to the mandate. And we noted that the state staffing resources used to help struggling

nursing homes will also have to comply. The timeframe and consequences of non-compliance for the mandate are not yet final; however, the choice of penalties or insufficient staff is one everyone agrees needs to be avoided. There is no current plan on how the state will help providers; only a commitment to address these issues with the goal of providers maintaining staffing levels while remaining compliant with the mandate. ([Back to top.](#))

ODH is monitoring vaccine booster status; distributed info for vaccine providers

The Ohio Department of Health is following closely information related to the mRNA booster shots expected to begin in late September. HHS released a statement in mid August announcing that booster shots would be recommended after 8 months of the initial vaccination for the mRNA vaccines: "We are prepared to offer booster shots for all Americans beginning the week of September 20 and starting 8 months after an individual's second dose. At that time, the individuals who were fully vaccinated earliest in the vaccination rollout, including many health care providers, nursing home residents, and other seniors, will likely be eligible for a booster. We would also begin efforts to deliver booster shots directly to residents of long-term care facilities at that time, given the distribution of vaccines to this population early in the vaccine rollout and the continued increased risk that COVID-19 poses to them. We also anticipate booster shots will likely be needed for people who received the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine. Administration of the J&J vaccine did not begin in the U.S. until March 2021, and we expect more data on J&J in the next few weeks. With those data in hand, we will keep the public informed with a timely plan for J&J booster shots as well."

ODH issued the following information to vaccine providers:

The Ohio Department of Health is reviewing the latest data. In the meantime, ODH would like to share with COVID-19 vaccine providers key messages to share with patients. We've also included links to the newly published CDC reports for your review.

Key messages/talking points:

- The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be remarkably effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant.
- Although we continue to see stable and highly effective protection against hospitalizations and severe outcomes for people who are fully vaccinated, we are seeing a decrease in vaccine effectiveness against infection.
- The White House outlined a plan to offer booster doses for the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines to fully vaccinated adults 18 and older eight months after their second dose of the vaccine.
- This plan would tentatively begin on Sept. 20 for those Americans who received the first doses of mRNA vaccines in the winter, including older Ohioans, those in long-term care

facilities, and healthcare workers. At this time, the need for and timing of booster doses for Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients is still under study.

- This plan is still contingent on a recommendation by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and approval by the FDA.

Resources:

Below you will find links to the new reports. We encourage vaccine providers to review as well and be prepared to answer any public questions about booster doses and ongoing effectiveness of the vaccines.

CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

- [New COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalizations Among Adults, by Vaccination Status — New York, May 3–July 25, 2021](#)
- [Sustained Effectiveness of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna Vaccines Against COVID-19 Associated Hospitalizations Among Adults — United States, March–July 2021](#)
- [Effectiveness of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna Vaccines in Preventing SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Nursing Home Residents Before and During Widespread Circulation of the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.617.2 \(Delta\) Variant — National Healthcare Safety Network, March 1–August 1, 2021](#)

We will update you with more information on the booster shots as it becomes available. ([Back to top.](#))

Save the date: ASHS Fall Conference Dec 9 and 10!

The Academy will be hosting its 2021 Fall Conference and Annual Meeting on Dec 9 and 10! The conference will once again be virtual via Zoom. While we understand people want in-person meetings and conferences again, the Delta variant along with the continued stress providers face with staffing has led us to another virtual conference. We really hope hindsight suggests this a terrible decision and by December we are back to living like it was 2019. But given attendees work with the most vulnerable population and to error on the side of caution, we will be keeping it real online. So join us via computer/tablet/phone December 9 and 10! More details coming soon! ([Back to top.](#))



National News

CMS to mandate vaccine for NH staff

CMS announced last week, and again on Sunday, that they will be mandating all nursing home staff to receive the vaccine: "The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is developing an emergency regulation requiring staff vaccinations within the nation's more than 15,000 Medicare and Medicaid-participating nursing homes. This new requirement is a key component of protecting the health and safety of nursing home residents and staff by ensuring that all nursing home staff receive COVID-19 vaccinations. Over the past several months, millions of vaccinations have been administered to nursing home residents and staff, and these vaccines have shown to help prevent COVID-19 and have proven to be effective against the Delta variant...

CMS will continue to analyze vaccination data for residents and staff from the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) data as an additional method of compliance monitoring and in keeping with current practice, as well as deploy the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs)—operated under the Medicare Quality Improvement Program—to educate and engage nursing homes with low rates of vaccinations.

CMS strongly encourages nursing home residents and staff members to get vaccinated as the Agency undergoes the necessary steps in the rule-making process over the course of the next several weeks. CMS expects nursing home operators to act in the best interest of residents and their staff by complying with these new rules, which the Agency expects to issue in September. CMS also expects nursing home operators to use all available resources to support employees in getting vaccinated, including employee education and vaccination clinics, as they work to meet this staff vaccination requirement."

We are encouraging providers to attend the CMS national stakeholder call on Wednesday, August 25th as they may discuss the vaccination requirement in more detail:

Wednesday, August 25, 2021 4:00pm-4:30pmET- Join the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for a National Nursing Home Stakeholder Call.

*** Register in advance for this Zoom Call:***

https://cms.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_WreK5eubQsqGIWbvr7wbpQ

During this call, we will provide a recap of recent announcements and provide National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) updates.

We will also keep you updated as we learn more about the proposed rules. ([Back to top.](#))

Pfizer vaccine receives full FDA approval

The FDA announced today that the Pfizer mRNA COVID vaccine received full approval. The vaccine is no longer being used under emergency use authorization. From the FDA: "Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine has been known as the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, and will now be marketed as Comirnaty (koe-mir'-na-tee), for the prevention of COVID-19 disease in individuals 16 years of age and older. The vaccine also continues to be available under emergency use authorization (EUA), including for individuals 12 through 15 years of age and for the administration of a third dose in certain immunocompromised individuals." [Please click here to read the full press release.](#) ([Back to top.](#))

CMS MLN Connects

News

- [Immunization: Medicare Covers Vaccines](#)

Compliance

- [Chiropractic Services: Comply with Medicare Billing Requirements](#)

Events

- [Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System: Instrument Walkthrough Webinar – August 26](#)
- [Medicare Ground Ambulance Data Collection System: Q&A Session – September 14](#)

MLN Matters® Articles

- [Implementation of the Capital Related Assets Adjustment \(CRA\) for the Transitional Add-on Payment Adjustment for New and Innovative Equipment and Supplies \(TPNIES\) Under the End Stage Renal Disease Prospective Payment System \(ESRD PPS\)](#)
- [Implementation of the GV Modifier for Rural Health Clinics \(RHCs\) and Federally Qualified Health Centers \(FQHCs\) for Billing Hospice Attending Physician Services](#)
- [Inpatient Psychiatric Facilities Prospective Payment System \(IPF PPS\) Updates for Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2022](#)
- [Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility \(IRF\) Annual Update: Prospective Payment System \(PPS\) Pricer Changes for FY 2022](#)
- [Medicare Part A Skilled Nursing Facility \(SNF\) Prospective Payment System \(PPS\) Pricer Update FY 2022](#)
- [Modifications/Improvements to Value-Based Insurance Design \(VBID\) Model – Implementation](#)

- [Skilled Nursing Facility \(SNF\) Claims Processing Updates](#)
- [Update of Internet Only Manual \(IOM\), Pub. 100-04, Chapter 8 - Outpatient ESRD Hospital, Independent Facility, and Physician/Supplier Claims](#)

Publications

- [IRF & LTCH: Q&A Basics](#)

Multimedia

- [Medicare Fraud & Abuse: Prevent, Detect, Report Web-Based Training — Revised](#)

[View this edition as PDF \(PDF\)](#)

[View this edition online](#)

[\(Back to top.\)](#)

Find a COVID-19 vaccine

Search **vaccines.gov**

Text your ZIP code to **438829**

Call **1-800-232-0233**

WE CAN DO THIS HHS.gov

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NOTABLE DATES OR EVENTS

[QIN-QIO Pain Management Webinar](#)
22 September @ Noon

**ASHS Fall Conference
 9 and 10 December**

[Click here for QIO training](#)

https://cms.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_WreK5eubQsqGIWbvr7wbpQ

During this call, we will provide a recap of recent announcements and provide National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) updates.

[series.](#)

[Click here for CMS NH COVID-19 Training Modules](#)

[Click here to view CGS Part A training events](#)

[Click here to view CGS Part B training events](#)

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