



1. **Registration Open – HQRP – Understanding the Composite Quality Measure – Webinar.** CMS is hosting a webinar on understanding the composite quality measure on Wednesday, June 2, from 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET. Spaces are limited so please only register if you can attend live; otherwise sign up for the list to receive notification of when the recording will be available. Click [here](#) to register for the HQRP webinar. If you would like to be notified by email when the recording of the webinar is available, click [here](#).

2. **Hospital and Healthcare Compensation Service (HCS) is has announced that they are currently conducting 2021-2022 Home Care and Hospice Salary and Benefits studies,** now underway and invites LeadingAge members to [participate](#). The deadline for participation in this year's study is August 2, 2021. The published results cover marketplace data for 60 jobs and 21 fringe benefits. The results cover job data by salary, hourly, and per visit rates with data breakouts by auspice, revenue size, region, state, and CBSA. Planned salary increases, turnover, caseload, and shift differential data are also covered.

**Directions to Participate in the Home Care or Hospice Salary & Benefits Study**

- Download the questionnaire from the HCS website: <https://www.hhcsinc.com>
- Email Rosanne Zabka with HCS, [RZabka@hhcsinc.com](mailto:RZabka@hhcsinc.com) to confirm your planned participation.
- Email your completed questionnaire to Rosanne by August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Study participants save over 50% off the **Report** price. The pre-paid participant rate is \$185 (payment due by 8/31/2021); the billed participant rate is \$205. The standard report pricing for nonparticipants is \$375.

3. **CMS Announces Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE) Beta Test Recruitment:** CMS and their contractor, Abt Associates are now recruiting Medicare-certified hospice providers to participate in a beta test of the draft hospice patient assessment instrument called Hospice Outcomes & Patient Evaluation (HOPE). Recruitment ends June 14, 2021. Data collection is anticipated to begin in fall 2021. The detailed recruitment announcement and application for participation are available on CMS's [Hospice QRP Provider and Stakeholder Engagement](#) webpage. Those interested in participating should complete the application and email to [HospiceAssessment@CMS.hhs.gov](mailto:HospiceAssessment@CMS.hhs.gov) by June 14, 2021.
4. **Republican Counteroffer on Infrastructure.** Senate leaders offered an infrastructure plan today with a price tag just under \$1 trillion; the original proposal from the White

House totaled \$2.3 trillion, with a compromise offered at \$1.7 trillion. More significant than the total spending, the offer described today did not include provisions to address the care infrastructure. In the compromise put forward by the White House, the President reiterated that any final agreement should include the \$400 billion for HCBS and other caregiving supports. Negotiations on infrastructure will continue.

5. **ACL Annual Profile released.** This afternoon the HHS Administration on Community Living released its [Annual Profile of Older Americans](#), which includes the usual demographics and experiences of older adults living in the community but also pulls data from a variety of sources to look at the catastrophic impact of the pandemic on older adults, including mental health and economic challenges. This year's Profile also captures some of the amazing work of the aging network and aging services providers. Ninety-eight percent of people over age 64 live in the community, with 2% living in nursing homes. Most people in this age group have at least one chronic condition.
6. **Monoclonal antibody treatment webinar.** LeadingAge, AHCA, and AMDA are jointly collaborating with the federal COVID response team to hold a live event, "Update on the Use of Monoclonal Antibody (mAB) Therapies for COVID-19: A Review of New Treatments and At-Risk Populations." The event is set for June 15 at 3:00 PM ET, and will be available on the AHCA Education platform. Dr. Michael Anderson of the federal COVID response team will present an overview, followed by a panel with a representative from each of the three associations talking about experiences, obstacles, and opportunities with mAB. Register [here](#) for the event.
7. **Statement on the Swearing-In of Chiquita Brooks-LaSure as Administrator of CMS:** Today, following a bipartisan confirmation by the U.S. Senate, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra formally [swore in Chiquita Brooks-LaSure as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#). The following is an excerpt from Secretary Becerra's statement: "Chiquita Brooks-LaSure's historic appointment and confirmation as the first Black woman to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services further demonstrates the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to bringing diverse perspectives and seasoned leaders to drive and improve the U.S. health care system. Chiquita, an expert in health care policy and a veteran of CMS, will be a trusted steward of our nation's health insurance programs and a critical partner as we tackle the nation's health care challenges."
8. **Background Rationale and Evidence for Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People:** CDC [updated their background rationale and evidence for public health recommendations for fully vaccinated people](#). Data were added from studies published since the last update that further demonstrate currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines are effective against SARS-CoV-2 infection, symptomatic and severe disease, and hospitalization with COVID-19. Data were added suggesting that currently authorized mRNA vaccines provide protection against variants of concern, including the

B.1.1.7 strain that is predominant in the United States. Data were added from studies published since the last update that further demonstrate people who are fully vaccinated with a currently authorized mRNA vaccine are protected against asymptomatic infection and, if infected, have a lower viral load than unvaccinated people.

9. **Commonwealth Fund Brief on Framework for Considering Future of COVID-19 Medicare Waivers.** The Commonwealth Fund put out a new issue brief that looks at the over 200 waivers issued during the COVID-19 PHE and how the Biden Administration might frame their thinking about which to keep in place. The brief, including an appendix of which waivers CMS can act on alone and which need Congressional approval, can be found [here](#)
10. **Addressing Hesitancy with Caregivers and Healthcare Navigators:** HHS [released a new podcast episode in their COVID-19 Immunity in Our Community series](#). This episode, “Addressing Hesitancy with Caregivers and Healthcare Navigators,” discusses how making healthcare decisions for yourself – or the people in your care – are some of the most important choices you will ever make. It's understandable to have questions about the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines. Community healthcare navigators are there to help ease vaccine-related concerns, and bridge the gap of trust between their communities and the healthcare providers that serve them. These navigators can be a local nurse or pharmacist, or even just a faith leader or friendly neighbor. This episode, we hear from Heather Simpson, a mother who was once part of the anti-vax community. Thoughtful discussion helped change her mind, and now she's been vaccinated against COVID-19. She talks about the best way to open up discussions with vaccine-hesitant people. Then, we hear from Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about the importance of these healthcare navigators, and what the CDC is doing to support them.
11. **Older Adults.** CDC [updated their information for older adults regarding getting the COVID-19 vaccine](#). The risk of severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age. This is why CDC recommends that adults 65 years and older receive COVID-19 vaccines. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is an important step to help prevent getting sick from COVID-19. CDC provides tips on how to get a COVID-19 vaccine and information about COVID-19 vaccines for older adults.
12. **FEMA Funeral Benefit program changes coming?** Politico is reporting tonight that thousands of people seeking federal funeral assistance from the FEMA [funeral assistance program](#) have not been able to get that help because their death certificates do not list COVID as the cause of death. FEMA has been advising applicants to seek changes in death certificates, but medical personnel are reluctant to amend death certificates. The program includes safeguards to prevent fraud but there are still concerns that people will try to game the program with the result that people who

really need the help may not be able to get it. According to the report, FEMA officials are working with CDC to find ways to reduce the burden on applicants.