# Home Health and Hospice Weekly: Recap of LeadingAge Updates

**Hospice VBID Request for Applications.** On March 4, CMMI announced request for applications (RFAs) for theValue-Based Insurance Design Model Hospice Benefit Component. Medicare Advantage Organizations must apply to participate in the model by April 15, 2022. The announcement also includes CY 2023 preliminary hospice capitation payment rates methodology for CY2023.

**Home Health Public Reporting Refresh Coming in April.** In April 2022, publicly reported OASIS data will be released with two new measures in that align with the Improving Medicare Post-Acute Care Transformation (IMPACT) Act: 1) Percent of Residents Experiencing One or More Falls with Major Injury and 2) Application of Percent of Long-Term Care Hospital Patients with an Admission and Discharge Functional Assessment and a Care Plan that Addresses Function. While these two new OASIS measures will be reported, CMS made the decision to delay the resumption of claims-based quality measures in order to analyze the impact of the exclusion of Q1 and Q2 2020 claims data on risk adjustment and reporting. CMS is targeting July 2022 refresh of Care Compare for the claims-based measure updates. CMS updated the Home Health Quality Reporting Program COVID-19 Public Reporting Tip Sheet.

**Hospice Quality Reporting Program TEP Update.** CMS released a Summary Report from the Hospice Quality Reported Program Technical Expert Panel (TEP). The report covers the conversations of the TEP a number of issues which will inform the development of the the Hospice Outcome & Patient Evaluation tool (HOPE) which will eventually replace the current Hospice Item Set (HIS). The TEP spent time looking at timely reassessment of symptoms as important to prioritize when considering future HOPE process measures. The TEP did not feel like many process measures currently available provided meaningful indicators of quality except for medication management, though the TEP felt individuals in inpatients facilities should be excluded from that measure. The TEP also expressed reservations about the usefulness of data from deficiencies and complaint surveys to determine hospice quality. Variation in surveyor process, regional data, and inconsistencies in deficiency citations over time all gave the TEP pause on pursuing future HOPE based on surveys.

**Hospice Care Compare Refresh Now Available.** The February 2022 quarterly Hospice Quality Reporting Program has gone live on Care Compare. Data submission requirements were temporarily put on hold

after the November 2020 refresh. The Hospice CAHPS Survey measure scores continue to exclude Q1 and Q2 of calendar year 2020. As a reminder, in CY 2022 all hospices must meet the threshold requirements for HIS submission of 90% and participate in Hospice CAHPS to avoid a 4% reduction in their FY 2024 Annual Payment Update. This will be the first year of increased penalties from 2% to 4%.

**New resources available from CDC on COVID-19 and infection control.** CDC's Project Firstline offers resources to help frontline healthcare workers understand and confidently apply the infection control principles necessary to protect themselves, their families and their community.  On March 14 from 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET CDC is hosting an event to introduce new infection control resources. Dozens of new educational resources and training materials will go live on the following day, March 15. To register for the event on March 14, click here.

**Webinar: Earned Income Tax Credit Information Now Available.** New resources and information about the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is now available on the HUD Exchange. The 2021 American Rescue Plan (ARP) expanded the EITC to include more workers without children as well as older workers (65+), temporarily raised the maximum credit for individuals without dependents from approximately $540 to $1,500 and increased the income cap to qualify for individuals without dependents from approximately $16,000 to $21,000. The EITC is not considered income and receiving these tax credits will not impact anyone's eligibility for federal benefits. The federal government along with hundreds of non-profit organizations, state and local governments, and members of Congress are engaged in an all-out push to make sure every eligible American receives the EITC by filing their taxes. With just over one month left until the tax filing deadline of April 18, join HUD, Treasury, and the White House on Wednesday, March 9, 2022, from 2:00 PM – 2:45 PM for a webinar on the CTC and EITC.

**CMS Releases Medicaid "Unwinding" Resources.** CMS issued new guidance to states about promoting continuing of coverage and distributing the eligibility and enrollment workload in the upcoming unwinding of Medicaid PHE related authorities. They highlight resources at www.medicaid.gov/unwinding including a communications toolkit. The email sent out by the Administration with details can be found here and the State Health Officials Memo can be found here.

**Biden Administration Releases New COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.** The White House released a new National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. It is focused on 4 key goals: 1) Protect and treat against covid; 2) prepare for new variants; 3) prevent economic and educational shutdowns; and 4) continue to vaccinate the world. Each of the four goals has a number of specific tactics, both for the Administration to execute on its own and for them to work with Congress to achieve.

**HMA Webinar on new ACO Reach Model.** Health Management Associates is hosting a webinar on the new ACO REACH Model. One of the speakers is their new Managing Director for Medicare, Amy Bassano, formerly the Deputy Director at CMMI. Register and learn more here.

**Interview with Dr. Michael Fine, author and former Director of Rhode Island Department of Health.** Here is an article featuring some of the highlights from our interview with Dr. Michael Fine, Chief Health Strategist for the city of Central Falls, Rhode Island. Central Falls has the distinction of having both the most COVID and the least COVID at different points during the pandemic.  He talked about his views on the new CDC recommendations and the tension between politics and public health, COVID and the aging services workforce, and myths related to Omicron. He further suggested that we have not figured out how to best use rapid testing and should be using it more.

**West Health Institute Requesting Feedback on Telehealth.** West Health Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan applied medical research organization, is seeking to understand providers' barriers, goals, and experiences serving older adults via telehealth. They are working closely with subject matter experts from around the country to develop provider-focused principles, guidelines, and implementation strategies to support the use of telehealth with older adults. The results of this 10-minute survey will be used in those efforts.

**Provider Relief Webinar Recording Now Available:** HRSA has finally posted the recording of its Feb 17 webinar on Nursing Home Infection Control Provider Relief Reporting and the corresponding slides. The content is nearly identical to the Feb 2 webinar that HRSA presented for LeadingAge members. Just a friendly reminder that second period reporting, including the reporting on Nursing Home Infection Control funds, must be completed by 11:59 p.m. ET on March 31.

**Upcoming Events for the VBID Model.** The CY 2023 Value-Based Insurance Design (VBID) Model and Hospice Benefit Component Overview Webinar, including a review of the CY 2023 preliminary payment design related to the Hospice Benefit Component, will be held on March 10, 2022, from 3-4 PM ET. Please register for this webinar at this link here. Additionally, Office Hours will be held on April 5, 2022, from 3-4 PM ET to offer attendees an opportunity to ask questions related to the VBID Model, the Hospice Benefit Component, and the Model application process. Please register for this office hour session here. For additional information, visit the VBID overview page or contact VBID@cms.hhs.gov.

**CMS stakeholder call on Medicaid RFI.** CMS held a stakeholder call on the Medicaid and CHIP RFI on March 1. A lot of the questions were about logistics of submitting responses because CMS is using an online form rather than a traditional upload of a pdf to regulations.gov for these comments. Each question in the RFI has room for 20,000 words so there should be plenty of space for comments. If you need to use citations, one suggestion that came up was putting them in a google doc and embedding it in the form; there is no way to attach documents for this submission. Commentors do not have to answer all the questions, just the ones most pertinent to them. CMS asked for comments to be as specific and actionable as possible because they plan to utilize a range of tools to implement the suggestions, some of which may be faster than others. LeadingAge will be commenting and members can please send their ideas to Mollie (MGurian@LeadingAge.org). The RFI can found at: https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-announces-request-information-access-care-and-coverage-people-enrolled

**New Housing an Aging Society Program.** The Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University has launched a new Housing an Aging Society Program. The program will be led by Jennifer Molinsky, a 2019 LeadingAge Annual Meeting & Expo speaker and longtime research trailblazer on affordable housing issues and older adults. The HAS Program will have five research priorities: housing affordability and stability; safety and accessibility; neighborhood livability; housing, supportive services, and healthcare; and, housing options. Visit the new Housing an Aging Society Program here.

**The Latest from the LTSS Center @UMass Boston.** Read the latest report from the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston, which outlines how community stakeholders can help older adults better prepare for and recover from climate change-related emergencies. The Impact of Climate Change: Why Older Adults are Vulnerable highlights the disproportionately negative, short- and long-term impacts of climate change on older adults and recommends actions that various stakeholders can take to address those impacts.

**Your Stories Matter: Tell us Your Resident and Client Engagement Innovations.** The LeadingAge Story Collector makes it easy to tell your stories of innovation and impact. We want to learn about your innovations in resident and client engagement, and how they will drive change for the future. How do you build a rich and inclusive culture with the people you serve? How has your messaging changed? What lessons about transparency and communication are you putting to work? Visit the Story Collector, powered by LeadingAge Gold Partner Greystone, to share.

**New Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Member Community Group.** We are excited to announce a new My LeadingAge Member Community group. Guided by LeadingAge's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitment, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion group offers members, regardless of provider setting, professional role, or personal identities, a virtual space to engage with peers and share resources about ways to move the work of diversity, equity and inclusion forward within organizations. This group is open to all who wish to cultivate both individual and organizational learnings, skills, and practices in a shared community setting. Log in to your MyLeadingAge account to check out the new DEI Member Community Group.

**Will We See You in DC for Leadership Summit?** The 2022 LeadingAge Leadership Summit provides a unique opportunity for leaders in aging services to take time to think strategically as we examine the current trends, emerging issues, and long-term changes that we will need to adapt to in order to keep our organizations successful. Learn more and register today.