



## COVID-19 Weekly Compendium #37

### CLINICAL UPDATES

- [COVID -19: Drugs and Vaccine Tracker](#) - STAT

### INTERESTING READS

- [Fever, Symptom Screening Misses Many Coronavirus Cases](#) - Medscape (November 12)  
Temperature and COVID-19 symptom checks like the ones used at schools and doctor's offices have again proved inadequate for spotting coronavirus infections and preventing outbreaks.
- [Moderna's COVID-19 Vaccine Shines In Clinical Trial](#) - NPR (November 16)  
A second COVID-19 vaccine now also appears highly effective in preventing illness following exposure to the virus that causes the disease. The biotech company Moderna Inc. said Monday that its experimental vaccine was 94.5% effective in preventing disease, according to an analysis of its clinical trial.
- [COVID-19: A physician guide to keeping your practice open](#) - AMA (October 14)  
As physicians reopen and strive to keep open their practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, measures to limit the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus to patients, caregivers, staff and themselves are just as, if not more, necessary as ever.

### POLICY UPDATE

#### **President-elect Biden Adds Former HRSA Administrator and Deputy Secretary of HHS to Transition Team**

Last week, President-elect Biden tapped Mary Wakefield, who ran the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) during most of the Obama administration, to serve on his [transition team](#) for the U.S. Health and Human Services Department (HHS). During her tenure at HRSA, Wakefield managed the 340B program's growth under the Affordable Care Act, both in terms of expanded eligibility and program integrity enhancements. Under Wakefield, HRSA published 340B program final guidance in 2010 clarifying that covered entities could contract with an unlimited number of pharmacies to dispense 340B purchased drugs, and also initiated covered entity and drug manufacturer compliance audits.

#### **Update on NACHC's 340B Lawsuit**

As previously reported, NACHC filed a lawsuit against HHS to protect health centers' ability to fully participate in the 340B Discount Drug Program on [October 21, 2020](#). NACHC estimates that at least 10 million low-income patients will suffer reduced access to health center services and affordable medicine unless HHS acts now to protect the program. Per questions from our bi-weekly PCA/HCCN Policy Call, here are some updates on the suit:

- NACHC is the only named plaintiff. No individual CHCs will be added as a party to the lawsuit.
- Feldesman Tucker received and reviewed over 100 draft declarations.
- Feldesman Tucker is currently preparing a subset of the total as evidence to support a potential motion for a preliminary injunction.
- Within the next few days, Feldesman Tucker will reach out to the selected declarants before anything is finalized, providing potential declarants the opportunity to decide against executing a declaration, if they wish to change their mind.



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### POLICY UPDATE (CONT'D)

#### Lame-Duck Session Legislative Outlook

It is not clear how much Congress may or may not be able to accomplish during the remainder of this session but the following is a short list of issues of importance:

- **COVID-19 Legislation:** COVID relief negotiations are likely to pick back up as well as conversations on maintaining a larger national stockpile of tests and supplies; however, it remains to be seen if a deal can be reached as both sides have yet to agree on the scope and cost of the next package, with Republicans insisting on a much smaller bill than what Democrats — and even the White House — had been advocating ahead of the election. If the Senate, House and White House can agree upon a final number for pandemic relief, many of the issues can be resolved by Congress.
- **Health Extenders:** Several significant health extenders were continued through Dec. 11, including funding for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps, and the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program. Congress will need to address these on a short- or long-term basis.
- **Surprise Billing:** It is possible that a deal could be reached on surprise billing, which could serve as a pay-for for the extenders mentioned above, and the outstanding disagreements are not partisan.
- **Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Appropriations:** The Senate Appropriations Committee recently released its FY 2021 appropriations legislation, though it was not finalized with Democratic support. The Democrats have raised concerns and issues that they would like to see.

### RACIAL JUSTICE/HEALTH DISPARITY RESOURCES & INFORMATION

#### Maine DHHS Health Equity Webinar - Exploring Vaccine Hesitancy & Building Trust for COVID-19 Vaccines

Wednesday, November 18 | 7:30 – 8:30 AM

The webinar will be focused on the very important issue of preparing for the upcoming COVID-19 vaccines, and how clinicians can work to build trust with their patients to accept vaccines that can help provide important protection during this pandemic.

Please join Maine DHHS for a conversation with...

- Sana Osman, Community Health Worker, Maine Access Immigrant Network (MAIN)
- Inza Ouattara, State Refugee Health Coordinator, Catholic Charities Maine
- Sandra C. Quinn PhD, Professor and Chair, Department of Family Science and Senior Associate Director, Maryland Center for Health Equity

**Please note that attendees are asked to register in advance for this and the remaining webinars in this series:**

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcsfuGvpj0jGdaRiW5Y15qnYa2AMVriHgal>

Video recordings of the previous ME DHHS Health Equity webinars (Aug – Oct) are posted on the ME CDC website: [www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus) (scroll down to “Health Equity webinars”)

For resources and other relevant information, please visit the [Racial Justice/Health Disparities Resources](#) page on the [MPCA website](#).



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### TELEHEALTH UPDATE

[Launching a Toolkit for Safety-Net Clinics Implementing Telemedicine During the COVID-19 Pandemic - The Commonwealth Fund \(October 27\)](#)

While [telemedicine is a crucial tool](#) for patients and health care providers, particularly in the current COVID-19 pandemic, without targeted intervention telemedicine has the potential to further exacerbate health disparities. Through a partnership among the Commonwealth Fund, the [Center for Care Innovations](#) (CCI), and the University of California, San Francisco, we have launched a toolkit to support providers in using telemedicine to care for vulnerable patients during this challenging time, and as means of advancing health equity.

- [Telemedicine for Health Equity Toolkit](#)

### **HITEQ Learning Collaborative - Hybrid Health Center: Building Systems that Sustainably Support both Telehealth and In-Person Care**

This HITEQ Learning Collaborative will bring together health centers across the nation in a series of four structured virtual learning sessions in which participants engage with subject matter experts in didactic learning and discussion. Discussion topics will include a framework for telehealth services, application of the telehealth framework to hybrid care and defining a multi-stage approach to offering in-person care, barriers to accessing telehealth or in-person care and strategies to overcome barriers, and determining next steps to enhance hybrid care.

The session schedule is:

- **November 18** Session 3 - Understanding Patient Barriers to Care due to the Pandemic and Beyond
- **December 2** Session 4 - Creating a Patient-Centric Approach for Telephonic and In-Person Hybrid Care

For more information and to register, [click here](#).

For updates from insurers and other relevant information concerning Telehealth, please visit the [Telehealth Resources](#) page on the [MPCA website](#).



### **Is Your Health Center Hiring?**

Click on the Job Board icon to utilize the new MPCA Job Board and list your openings on our website!



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### CHCNET UPDATE

**Visit Volume Impact Dashboard Project:** MPCA is continuing the *Visit Volume Impact Dashboard* project to understand how COVID-19 has impacted health centers and how health centers have responded. Please continue to report your monthly data via [this spreadsheet](#) and email it, or any questions, to [gparent@mepca.org](mailto:gparent@mepca.org).

For the latest information concerning the MPCA's HCCN, **Community Health Center Network of Maine (CHCNet)**, or for support with health information technology needs, please visit the [CHCNet Member Portal](#) or contact Greg Parent: [gparent@mepca.org](mailto:gparent@mepca.org).

### RESOURCES ADDENDUM

For the **Stay Informed, Sign Up, Maine Helps, and Coping and Stress Resources** information, please visit the [Weekly Compendium Resources Addendum](#) page on the [MPCA website](#).



*Please click on the calendar for a full listing of upcoming MPCA trainings and events. These events can be viewed by the day, month or as a list.*

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**\*\* Join MPCA on SLACK!** We are building our communication outreach capacity between meetings using the Slack communication platform. Many of you are already connected with us in several peer groups including our **Clinical Channel** and our **Billing and Coding Channel**. Please feel free to reach out to [it@mepca.org](mailto:it@mepca.org) for help with joining. **\*\***