

# COVID-19 WEEKLY COMPENDIUM

March 8, 2021

## COVID-19: ONE YEAR LATER

This week marks the one year anniversary of COVID-19 descending upon our state, triggering the start of what would turn out to be an enormous, and sometimes unrelenting, response from Maine's Community Health Centers. The resilience, patience, and unwavering dedication they've shown not only demonstrates the continual impact of Maine's CHCs, but also the passion and commitment to the health and wellness of the communities they serve.

We would like to thank them all for their incredible efforts in taking care of their patients and communities during this unprecedented time. Every day we are awe-inspired by the work that they do!

With gratitude and appreciation - the MPCA Staff



## CLINICAL UPDATE

[Susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 Infection among Children and Adolescents Compared With Adults](#) - JAMA (3/7)

## VACCINE UPDATES

**When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others** - USCDC (3/8)

COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from getting sick. Based on what we know about COVID-19 vaccines, people who have been fully vaccinated can [start to do some things that they had stopped](#) doing because of the pandemic.

**COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Toolkit**

NACHC has prepared a [COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Toolkit](#) for CHCs to use to build confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine and encourage CHC staff and the communities they serve to get the vaccine and help protect against COVID-19. The toolkit includes customizable sample key messages, FAQs, and sample social media posts, a press release template, and a radio PSA template.

### **REMINDER: Weitzman ECHO Series on COVID-19**

[Registration Link](#)

**March 10, 12:00 PM** | Population Management Approach to Reaching Key Populations as they Become Eligible

**March 16, 12:00 PM** | Activity Session on Population Management Approach for Reaching Key Populations (Activity session that expands on the March 10 COVID ECHO webinar, for groups of health centers in which provided guidance and consulting on specific topics related to health centers' objectives.)

**March 17, 12:00 PM** | Essential Policies, Procedures, and Roles in Managing,

## POLICY UPDATES

**Biden Package Passes Senate; Health Center Provisions Remain Untouched**

The Senate passed [President Biden's \\$1.9 trillion COVID relief plan](#) on Saturday, after an all-night "vote-a-rama." The vote was 50 to 49 on a party-line vote. The House is expected to vote Tuesday on the bill to approve changes made in the Senate, none of which involved House-passed funding for health centers, LALs, National Health Service Corps, Nurse Corps or the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education programs. Democratic leaders hope to have the bill on the President's desk by Friday, March 12, two days ahead of the expiration of unemployment benefits for 14 million individuals.

**Xavier Becerra's Nomination to be HHS Secretary Facing More Delays**

The Senate Finance Committee is still waiting to move out of committee the nomination of Xavier Becerra as Health and Human Services secretary. Senate Majority Leader Schumer may have to bring the nomination up for a full Senate vote under a "motion to discharge" as the committee remains deadlocked on a 14-14 party-line vote on the nomination. The opposition to Becerra's nomination makes him the first of President Biden's Cabinet nominees not to be favorably reported out of committee. At this time, it is still likely that Becerra will be confirmed as early as this week given the urgency of staffing up the Department during the pandemic.

## CHCs Waiting on HRSA Administrative Dispute Resolution Process for Relief from Contract Pharmacy Restrictions

As previously reported, all three lawsuits brought by 340B providers regarding drug makers' refusal to ship 340B drugs to contract pharmacies have led to the same outcome: the courts will not get involved until a decision is reached via HRSA Administrative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. Several organizations – including NACHC – filed claims under the ADR process in January, when the process was first made available, but to date HRSA has not taken any public action on these claims. A critical first step would be for the members of the ADR panel (akin to judges) to be appointed. President Trump appointed ADR panel members on the day before he left office, but the announcement was rolled back as part of President Biden's regulatory freeze.

### MaineCare Announces Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Codes and Rate

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, MaineCare announced the codes and rate for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Procedure code for the vaccine is 91303 with an SL modifier. The procedure code for the administration is 0031A and the reimbursement is \$26.21.

## INTERESTING READS

[Fully vaccinated people can gather without masks, visit indoors, says CDC](#) - *Portland Press Herald* (3/8)

Fully vaccinated Americans can gather with other vaccinated people indoors without wearing a mask or social distancing, according to long-awaited guidance from federal health officials.

[Why Opening Windows Is a Key to Reopening Schools](#) - *The New York Times* (2/26)

The C.D.C. is urging communities to reopen schools as quickly as possible, but parents and teachers have raised questions about the quality of ventilation available in public school classrooms to protect against the coronavirus.

[Covid-19 Pill Shows Promise in Preliminary Testing](#) - *The Wall Street Journal* (3/6)

An experimental Covid-19 drug that promises to be a kind of Tamiflu for the pandemic had positive results in a preliminary study, one of the drug's developers said.

[Women Report Worse Side Effects after a Covid Vaccine](#) - *The New York Times* (3/8)

Men and women tend to respond differently to many kinds of vaccines. That's probably because of a mix of factors, including hormones, genes and the dosing of the shots.

### REMINDER: Healthcare Coalition of Maine Infectious Disease Surge Tabletop Exercise

Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> | 12:00 - 3:00 PM | [Registration](#) and [Information](#)

Quarterly Statewide meeting of the Healthcare Coalition of Maine. This meeting will include the Infectious Disease Surge Plan Tabletop Exercise.



### 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!

## DENTAL UPDATES

[Salivary Diagnostics Show Promise for Point-of-Care/Point-of-Need Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#) - (*Journal of Dental Research* 3/2)

[COVID-19 pandemic spurs stress-related dental conditions](#) - *DrBicuspid.com* (3/5)

## TELEHEALTH UPDATE

[Telehealth claims surged in 2020](#) - *HealthExec.com* (3/8)

Telehealth claim lines rose 2,817% from December 2019 to December 2020, according to a new report that revealed how the COVID-19 pandemic has changed how healthcare is delivered and consumed.

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

## CHCNET UPDATE

### **ImmPact COVID-19 Reporting**

For CHCs interested in improving their connection to ImmPact, Maine's Immunization Information System (IIS), please follow these steps:

1. Complete the [Onboarding Readiness Checklist and submit the Data Exchange Onboard Application](#).
  - a. Be sure to specify whether you're seeking flat-file upload capability or full HL7 integration (for real-time EHR-to-ImmPact reporting) and reiterate whether or not you'd prefer to involve HealthInfoNet in the process and leverage your HIE connection.
  - b. Once you email the form, ImmPact will begin processing the application and eventually follow up to coordinate the connection(s) necessary between the IIS and CHC (including EHR vendor and HIE, if applicable).
2. While ImmPact is processing your application:
  - a. Review the [Flat File Transfer Specification Document](#),
  - b. Build a report/reporting template according to the specifications and requirements therein, and
  - c. Contact your EHR vendor to notify and prepare of them of upcoming connections to the IIS. Your vendor may have specific steps to follow that will facilitate the connection.

**ImmPact is also offering multiple trainings each week to ensure users are have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet reporting expectations.** These meetings should be shared widely with all applicable staff. Reach out to Greg Parent ([gparent@mepca.org](mailto:gparent@mepca.org)) if you would like more information on these trainings.

**For more information, email ImmPact directly:**

- General information/requests: [Impact.Support@maine.gov](mailto:Impact.Support@maine.gov)
- Deepa Chaudhary, Interface Specialist (HL7 support): [Deepa.Chaudhary@maine.gov](mailto:Deepa.Chaudhary@maine.gov)
- Danielle Sherwood, ImmPact Program Manager: [Danielle.Sherwood@maine.gov](mailto:Danielle.Sherwood@maine.gov)

**Please cc: Greg Parent, CHCNet Program Manager ([gparent@mepca.org](mailto:gparent@mepca.org)) for support throughout the process.**

**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 HCs 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).

**RACIAL JUSTICE/HEALTH DISPARITY RESOURCES & INFO**

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

**RESOURCES ADDENDUM**

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



Please click on the calendar for a full listing of upcoming MPCA trainings and events.

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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.