

# COVID-19 WEEKLY COMPENDIUM

MARCH 30, 2021 | YEAR 2, VOLUME 4

## CLINICAL UPDATES

[Dramatic Drop in COVID-19 Cases Seen Among Vaccinated Healthcare Workers](#) - *Medscape* (3/24)

[Clinical Trials Planned for Oral COVID Vaccine](#) - *Medscape* (3/24)

[Wondering about COVID-19 vaccines if you're pregnant or considering pregnancy?](#) - *Harvard Health Publishing* (1/7)

[Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines](#) - *USCDC* (3/25)

[Symptoms of Anxiety or Depressive Disorder and Use of Mental Health Care among Adults during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) - *USCDC* (3/26)

## DENTAL UPDATES

[Viral Pandemics and Oral Health: Lessons Learned From HIV to SARS-CoV-2](#) - *practiceupdate.com* (3/27)

[Vancouver dentist, son invent face shield that fits loupes](#) - *DrBicuspid.com* (3/24)

## INTERESTING READS

[FEMA to Help Pay Funeral Costs for COVID-19-related Deaths](#) - *FEMA.gov*

Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA will provide financial assistance for COVID-19-related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020.

[Pfizer begins trials of COVID-19 vaccine in children under 12](#) - *The Hill* (3/25)

Pfizer has begun a clinical trial testing its COVID-19 vaccine in children under 12 this week, another milestone in expanding access to vaccinations beyond adults.

[Five reasons why COVID herd immunity is probably impossible](#) - *Nature.com* (3/18)

Even with vaccination efforts in full force, the theoretical threshold for vanquishing COVID-19 looks to be out of reach.

## TELEHEALTH UPDATE

### **FCC to Provide Consumer Support for COVID-19 Telehealth Access**

Last week, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Program to increase consumer access to on-line services and resources during the current pandemic. The EBB program will provide \$3.2 billion in consumer subsidies to purchase discounted internet services and devices to connect with virtual health care, jobs, and education, which will help overcome barriers to accessing telehealth and technology.

The application window begins in late April 2020, and will be available on a first come, first served basis. **HRSA is encouraging health centers to begin preparing patients now to ensure broad access to the support.** Additional information, including how to become a program Outreach Partner, is available at [FCC's EBB webpage](#).

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

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**Join Us for National Health Center Week - August 8-14, 2021**  
**"Community Health Centers: The Chemistry for Strong Communities"**

## **POLICY UPDATES**

### **White House “Invites” CHCs to Expand COVID Vaccine Eligibility to all Frontline Essential Workers and all Persons Age 16 and Over with High-risk Conditions**

As part of its [announcement](#) on Thursday morning about the \$6 billion in ARPA funding to CHC grantees, the White House also stated that:

“Community Health Centers participating in the federal Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program are invited to expand eligibility to populations in the ACIP’s 1C eligibility tier – this includes frontline essential workers and all persons 16 years and older with high-risk medical conditions. This means approximately 83% of the adults seen at Community Health Centers participating in the federal Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program will now be eligible for vaccinations.”

It is unclear how this invitation will impact CHCs in states that have not yet expanded vaccine eligibility this broadly.

### **Senate Passes Extension to the PPP Deadline; Bill to be Sent to the President’s Desk**

Applications for the PPP are expected to be extended until May 31, 2021. The Senate voted on [March 25, 2021](#) by a 92-7 margin to extend the deadline. The bill will now be sent to the President’s desk where it is expected to be signed. Additionally, the SBA will have an extra 30 days after the deadline to process applications. CHCs are currently eligible for [First Draw PPP Loans](#) if they have 500 or more employees, but fewer than 500 employees per location. Existing PPP borrowers that did not receive loan forgiveness by December 27, 2020, can reapply for a loan if they previously returned some or all of their loan funds or request to modify their First Draw PPP loan amount if they previously did not accept the full amount for which they were eligible. [Second Draw PPP Loans](#) are only available to entities that received a First Draw PPP loan and will or have used the full amount for authorized uses, have no more than 300 employees per location, and can demonstrate at least a 25% reduction in gross receipts between comparable quarters in 2019 and 2020.

### **LIFT America Act Introduced by the Energy and Commerce Committee Democrats**

The Leading Infrastructure for Tomorrow’s America Act, or [LIFT America Act](#), was introduced by Democratic members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. In addition to modernizing the nation’s infrastructure, combating climate change, and investing in public health, the \$312 billion package includes \$10 billion in funding for CHC capital project grants – part of a \$30 billion investment in health infrastructure – and \$80 billion for the deployment of secure and resilient high-speed broadband.

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

### **Community Health Workers & Pharmacists: Their Frontline Role in the Response to COVID-19**

Thursday, April 8, 2021 | 3:00 PM | [Information/Register](#)

This webinar will outline opportunities and strategies to support these workers and strengthen their ability to improve public health and promote health equity.

For resources and other relevant information, please visit the [Racial Justice/Health Disparities 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!

TOMORROW

**Webinar: CMS Marketplace Eligibility and Enrollment Group - The American Rescue Plan (ARP) of 2021**  
 Wednesday, March 31, 2021 | 2:00 PM | [Registration](#)

This presentation will help to educate assisters on what's in the ARP, offer an overview of some of the provisions that provide new benefits to consumers, and share helpful tips for how assisters can help consumers understand the law's impact.

### **CHCNET UPDATE**

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 [Compendium Resources Addendum](#) page on the [MPCA website](#).



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

### **MPCA CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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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.