

# COVID-19 WEEKLY COMPENDIUM

SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 | YEAR 2, VOLUME 28

## 2021 MPCA Annual Conference - Virtual *Embracing Change: Recovery, Resilience, and Reinvention*

[Registration](#) | [Agenda](#) | FMI: Andrea Watkins ([awatkins@mepca.org](mailto:awatkins@mepca.org))

**Reserve your spot to hear our Keynote Speaker on October 7**

Arethusa S. Kirk, MD, FAAP, National Senior Medical Director  
UHC Community and State, United HealthCare

**Session Dates:** 10/7, 10/14, 10/21 | 2:30 - 5:00 PM

**Annual Board of Directors Orientation:** 10/28 | 3:00 - 4:30 PM

### CLINICAL UPDATE

[Common hypertension drug may help treat severe COVID-19](#) - *Medical News Today* (9/7)

[Resurgence of SARS-CoV-2 Infection in a Highly Vaccinated Health System Workforce](#) - *New England Journal of Medicine* (9/1)

[FDA vaccine regulators argue against Covid-19 vaccine boosters in new international review](#) - *STAT* (9/13)

### DENTAL UPDATE

[Increased Prevalence of Dysgeusia in Pediatric Patients Diagnosed With COVID-19](#) - *PracticeUpdate* (9/12)

[Silver Nanoparticles May Prevent the Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 Infection](#) - *PracticeUpdate* (9/7)

### INTERESTING READS

[Idaho hospitals begin rationing health care amid COVID surge](#) - *AP News* (9/7)

Idaho public health leaders announced Tuesday that they activated “crisis standards of care” allowing health care rationing for the state’s northern hospitals because there are more coronavirus patients than the institutions can handle.

[Idaho’s COVID crisis becomes Washington hospitals’ problem](#) - *Seattle Times* (9/13)

Washington state is reeling under its own surge of coronavirus cases. But in neighboring Idaho, 20 miles down Interstate 90 from Spokane, unchecked virus transmission has already pushed hospitals beyond their breaking point.

[Pfizer to seek approval for vaccine in children 5 and over](#) - *The Hill* (9/10)

Pfizer and BioNTech announced this week that it will soon seek approval from global regulators for use of its coronavirus vaccine in children ages 5 and over. The vaccine makers said in an interview published on Friday that they are looking to produce smaller doses of the vaccine for younger children.

## Updated C2C Enrollment Toolkit Now Available

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Office of Minority Health (CMS OMH) has released an updated Coverage to Care (C2C) [Enrollment Toolkit](#) to support community partners, assisters, and others who help consumers enroll in health insurance coverage or change their health plan.

This toolkit contains information you can share with consumers who have not yet chosen a plan or have recently enrolled

## POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

### **Capital and Workforce Funding included in House Package**

Late last week, the House [Ways and Means](#) and [Energy and Commerce](#) Committees released their legislative markups for the partisan reconciliation spending plan, the Build Back Better Act. The Energy and Commerce Committee print included \$10 billion for health center capital projects, \$6 billion for the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program and \$300 million for Nurse Corps. The legislation also established a new federal Medicaid program for non-expansion states and an expansion of Medicare to include dental, vision and hearing services (also included in the Ways and Means draft). There are a number of other provisions on Medicaid/CHIP, the ACA and prescription drug pricing, that are of interest. All of these issues will be covered during the next PCA call on Tuesday. Additionally, an action alert was sent out on the capital and workforce funding and we need outreach to Democratic offices to ensure that the funding stays in as the package moves forward.

### **Vaccination Requirements for Health Care Facilities Expanded**

On September 9, 2021, The Biden-Harris Administration announced they will require COVID-19 vaccination of staff within all Medicare and Medicaid-certified [facilities](#) to protect both them and patients from the virus and its more contagious Delta variant. Under CMS, FQHCs are considered a “facility” and will need to comply as a condition for participating in the Medicare and Medicaid program. CMS is developing an Interim Final Rule with Comment Period that will be issued in October to provide more information.

### **HHS Secretary Becerra Releases Proposal to Lower Prescription Drug Costs**

HHS Secretary Becerra released a [comprehensive plan](#) to lower drug prices on September 9, 2021. The Drug Pricing Plan is part of a broader initiative stemming from President Joe Biden’s [Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy](#). The plan identifies three guiding principles centering on affordability and equitable access, improving and promoting competition in the prescription drug industry, and supporting scientific innovation to promote better health care. The Secretary also reiterated the agency’s support for the 340B Drug Pricing Program.

## RACIAL JUSTICE/HEALTH DISPARITY RESOURCES & INFO

### **Texting Strategies for COVID-19: Vaccine, Outstanding Gaps in Care and Social Determinants of Health**

Tuesday, Sept 21 | 1:00 PM | [Registration & Information](#)

Based upon more than 60M data points from more than 250 community health centers nationally, the CareMessage team will share an overview of recommendations around outreach to patients around the COVID-19 related use cases, including the COVID-19 vaccine/Delta variant, Million Hearts, cancer screenings, gaps in care and social determinants of health.

This is a joint webinar co-hosted by CareMessage and NACHC.

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!

## BILLING, CODING & TELEHEALTH NEWS

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

## 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 Michael Pancook: [mpancook@mepca.org](mailto:mpancook@mepca.org).

## RESOURCES ADDENDUM

[AFTER HOURS](#) - MPCA OFFICE HOURS RESOURCES

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:**

Christopher Pezzullo, DO	Clinical Director	<a href="mailto:cpezzullo@mepca.org">cpezzullo@mepca.org</a>
Bryan Wyatt, MA	Director of Policy & Communications	<a href="mailto:bw Wyatt@mepca.org">bw Wyatt@mepca.org</a>
Hillary Colcord, MHRT/C	Chief of Staff	<a href="mailto:hcolcord@mepca.org">hcolcord@mepca.org</a>
Susan Whittaker, CPC, CPMA	Quality Improvement Program Manager	<a href="mailto:swhittaker@mepca.org">swhittaker@mepca.org</a>
Hannah Hudson, MA	Policy & Communications Manager	<a href="mailto:hhudson@mepca.org">hhudson@mepca.org</a>
Michael Pancook, MPA	CHCNet Program Manager	<a href="mailto:mpancook@mepca.org">mpancook@mepca.org</a>
Sharon Stanley, MBA, CPC	Operations Improvement Program Manager	<a href="mailto:sstanley@mepca.org">sstanley@mepca.org</a>
Emily Ferry, MSW	Workforce Program Manager	<a href="mailto:eferry@mepca.org">eferry@mepca.org</a>
Beth Pearce	Oral Health Coordinator	<a href="mailto:bpearce@mepca.org">bpearce@mepca.org</a>
Kristen Kilcollins, MPH	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:kkilcollins@mepca.org">kkilcollins@mepca.org</a>
Megan Cross	Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:mcross@mepca.org">mcross@mepca.org</a>
Ashley Cleary	PSO Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:acleary@mepca.org">acleary@mepca.org</a>



**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.