

# COVID-19 WEEKLY COMPENDIUM

NOVEMBER 23, 2021 | YEAR 2, VOLUME 38

## CDC UPDATES

[COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Shots](https://www.cdc.gov) - [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) (11/19)

[Antibodies and COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov) - [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) (11/10)

[Domestic Travel During COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov) - [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) (11/12)



## INTERESTING READS

[Mills opens eligibility for COVID vaccine boosters to all adults amid record cases and hospitalizations](#) - *Portland Press Herald* (11/17)

Gov. Janet Mills on Wednesday opened up eligibility for COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to any adult who wants one, as the state grapples with alarming rates of new virus transmission and hospitalizations. The governor's announcement comes on the same day Maine reported a single-day record 1,042 new cases of COVID-19.

[COVID Spread Among Deer Causes Concern Over New Variants](#) - *Medscape* (11/17)

Growing reports that white-tailed deer have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 and that some have become ill with COVID-19, along with continuing infections and illness in zoo animals and pets, is giving rise to concern among some experts that animals may become reservoirs for the development of new variants or even direct animal-to-human transmission.

[Growing Evidence Supports Repurposing Antidepressants to Treat COVID-19](#) - *Medscape* (11/22)

Mounting evidence suggests selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) are associated with lower COVID-19 severity.

## DENTAL UPDATE

[COVID-19 vaccine may cause oral shingles](#) - *DrBicuspid* (11/15)

[Is COVID-19 severity linked to tooth, alveolar bone loss?](#) - *DrBicuspid* (11/22)

## WORKFORCE UPDATE

[2022 National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Programs](#) - **Deadline December 16, 2021**

Three programs, \*\*NHSC Loan Repayment Program, NHSC Substance Use Disorder Workforce Loan Repayment Program, NHSC Rural Community Loan Repayment\*\*, will award more applicants this year with an historic \$800 million in funding from the American Rescue Plan. Clinicians are likely eligible for \$50,000 to \$100,000 in Federal loan repayment. ***It does not matter how low your HPSA score is – every CHC is encouraged to have all their eligible clinicians apply.***

[2022 Nurse Corps Loan Repayment Program](#) - **Deadline January 13, 2022**

Offers funding to registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and nurse faculty toward payment of their qualifying educational loans in exchange for a two-year service commitment at a health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses or at an eligible school of nursing in the case of nurse faculty.

[HHS Announces Record Health Care Workforce Awards in Rural and Underserved Communities](#)

More than 22,700 primary care clinicians now serve in the nation's underserved tribal, rural and urban communities, including nearly 20,000 National Health Service Corps (NHSC) members, more than 2,500 Nurse Corps nurses, and approximately 250 awardees under a new program, the Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program.

## POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

### House Passes the Build Back Better Act

On Friday morning, the House passed the Build Back Better Act by a vote of 220-213 (Rep. Pingree voted yes, Rep. Golden voted no citing concerns about the SALT provisions). The bill will now go to the Senate, which is expected to amend the legislation. That will require the House to take up and pass the bill again before sending it to President Biden. The timeline to finish the legislation may be pushed to the end of this year as more immediate issues fill up the legislative schedule (raising the debt limit, deadline to fund the government). Provisions of interest to CHCs:

- **Health Center Capital:** \$2 billion (The late October text included just \$1 billion.)
- **Workforce:**
  - Teaching Health Center GME: \$3.37 billion
  - National Health Service Corps: \$2 billion
  - Nurse Corps: \$500 million
  - \$500 million each to establish/ expand medical schools and nursing schools in underserved areas.
  - Pathway to Practice Training Program: 1000 scholarships annually for students planning to attend medical school and practice a year in a medically underserved area after residency.
- **ACA:** Extends large premium tax credits on ACA plans
- **Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):** Permanently authorizes the CHIP program for low-income children.
- **Medicare:**
  - Allows Medicare to negotiate prices on a small number of high-price drugs, lowers out-of-pocket co-pays and limit out-of-pocket spending on Part D to \$2,000, sets \$35 out-of-pocket maximum for insulin, and creates a new \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit for expenses in Medicare Part D.
  - Expands Medicare coverage to include hearing services and hearing aids starting in 2023.
- **Medicaid:**
  - Expands access to behavioral and maternal health services
  - Closes the "coverage gap" for 2022-25 by expanding eligibility for ACA plans to persons who would have been Medicaid-eligible in non-expansion states.
  - \$150 billion for home care.

### Another Continuing Resolution Likely

As Congress struggles to negotiate an FY22 appropriations compromise before the December 3, 2021 deadline, another continuing resolution (CR) is expected to be necessary. Continuing resolutions keep funding level, including funding for CHCs. House Leadership has signaled they would like to see a shorter-term CR through mid to late December 2021, while some senators have suggested a CR until February or March 2022.

#### **REMINDER: Health Center Legislative and Community Engagement Survey**

The purpose of the survey is to gain a better understanding of the Network's current legislative and community engagement activities and identify areas where MPCA can provide assistance to health centers going forward in support of our advocacy goals. It is 14 questions (mostly Y/N) and should take less than 5 mins. If you have not done so already, please take a moment to complete this [short member survey](#).



#### **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!

## 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](#)

## 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>
Lisa Tapert, MPH	Chief Program Officer	<a href="mailto:ltapert@mepca.org">ltapert@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 Tounzen, MPH	Clinical Quality & Safety Program Manager	<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>
Becky Lambert	Behavioral Health Coordinator	<a href="mailto:blambert@mepca.org">blambert@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.