

COVID-19 WEEKLY COMPENDIUM

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CLINICAL UPDATE

[Study raises doubts about rapid Covid tests' reliability in early days after infection](#) - STAT (1/5)

[Update on COVID-19 Therapeutics](#) - Maine HAN PHA (1/7)

CDC UPDATE

[School Related Updates](#) - (1/2022)

[What We Know About Quarantine and Isolation](#) - (1/4)

INTERESTING READS

[Omicron Cases Are Hitting Highs, But New Data Put End in Sight](#) - Bloomberg (1/3)

A string of new studies has confirmed the silver lining of the omicron variant: Even as case numbers soar to records, the numbers of severe cases and hospitalizations have not. The data, some scientists say, signal a new, less worrying chapter of the pandemic.

[Answers to commonly asked questions about the omicron variant](#) - Portland Press Herald (1/9)

The new year has ushered in a new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, one dominated by the latest variant, omicron, which is spreading faster than any other version of the virus to date.

[Supreme Court seems skeptical of Biden's vaccine rules for businesses, more receptive to policy for health-care workers](#) - The Washington Post (1/7)

Conservative Supreme Court justices on Friday appeared skeptical that the Biden administration has legal authority to impose a broad coronavirus vaccination-or-testing requirement on large employers, casting doubt on President Biden's most ambitious plan to fight the pandemic.

[White House, USPS finalizing plans to ship COVID test kits to U.S. households](#) - Portland Press Herald (1/6)

The administration will launch a website allowing people to request tests, say four people familiar with the plans. The effort comes as the highly contagious omicron variant fuels a wave of new infections and a scramble for coronavirus tests nationwide.

[Pfizer CEO says omicron vaccine will be ready in March](#) - cncb.com (1/10)

Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla on Monday said a vaccine that targets the omicron variant of Covid will be ready in March, and the company's already begun manufacturing the doses.

[CDC doesn't yet see signal Omicron variant more severe in young kids](#) - Reuters (1/7)

COVID-19 hospitalizations in young children have reached their highest level yet in the United States, as Omicron fuels a major surge in cases, but it is not clear yet whether the variant causes more severe disease in young children, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said on Friday.

[As an E.R. Doctor, I Fear Health Care Collapse More Than Omicron](#) - The New York Times (1/10)

As the Omicron tsunami crashes ashore in New York City, the comforting news that this variant generally causes milder disease overlooks the unfolding tragedy happening on the front lines.

[Biden-Harris Administration Requires Insurance Companies and Group Health Plans to Cover the Cost of At-Home COVID-19 Tests, Increasing Access to Free Tests](#) - CMS.gov (1/10)

As part of its ongoing efforts across many channels to expand Americans' access to free testing, the Biden-Harris Administration is requiring insurance companies and group health plans to cover the cost of over-the-counter, at-home COVID-19 tests, so people with private health coverage can get them for free starting January 15th.

Is Your Health Center Hiring? Click [here](#) to utilize the MPCA Job Board and list your openings on our website!

POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

Congress Returns to Address BBB Act and Government Funding

As the Senate and House returned to their respective sessions on January 3 and January 10, 2022, action on [the Build Back Better \(BBB\) Act and FY22 appropriations loom large](#). In December, Sen. Manchin (D-WV) said he would not vote for the BBB in its current form. Negotiations are expected to restart between the White House, congressional leadership and Sen. Manchin to attempt to reach a consensus on a final package. These negotiations may be complicated by efforts to pass another supplemental COVID-19 relief package. Congress must also pass another continuing resolution or an omnibus appropriations bill by mid-February. Negotiations over a compromise omnibus bill appear to be [progressing](#) as House Democrats are beginning to support a \$740 billion defense spending plan, which is \$25 billion higher than the President's request.

ORAL HEALTH UPDATE

[Report calls for renewed investment in oral healthcare](#) - *DrBicuspid (12/23)*

[HPI: One-fourth of dentists raised fees in late 2021](#) - *DrBicuspid (1/4)*

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

BILLING, CODING & TELEHEALTH NEWS

On Monday, January 31, MPCA will resume monthly billing and coding peer group calls, occurring on the last Monday of each month from 9:30 - 10:30 AM. This is an opportunity for CHC billers and coders to meet with their peers and access support from each other and the coders at the PCA. **If you have staff that you would like to add to this group, please email Sharon Stanley at sstanley@mepca.org.**

On December 16, MPCA hosted a session on the MPCA Coding, Billing, and Audit Services that are now available. If you would like more information or would like to discuss a specific project, please reach out to Sharon Stanley at sstanley@mepca.org.

NCC, HRSA, & BPHC Webinar:

Leveraging Telehealth for Substance Use Disorder Care

Thursday, January 20 | 3:00 PM | [Registration](#)

In this this webinar, clinician consultants from the NCCC's Substance Use Warmline (855-300-3595; nccc.ucsf.edu) will provide an overview of promising practices and considerations for SUD care during the age of telehealth.

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

CHCNET UPDATE

MPCA is currently working on the submission of the HCCN 2022-2025 grant application. Initial submission is due February 1, 2022, with the final application due on March 1, 2022. Some exciting new work includes closing the referral loop for social risk factors and reducing provider burden.

To complete the application, we need your help in establishing base-line measures based on the number of centers able to meet the criteria for each objective. **Please return the form Sharon Stanley sent to participating health centers on 12/20 by Friday, 1/14.** If you have any questions, please reach out to either Sharon or Michael Pancook (sstanley@mepca.org or mpancook@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 Michael Pancook: mpancook@mepca.org.

What's happening? Click [here](#) for a full listing of upcoming MPCA trainings and events.

HEALTH EQUITY/SOCIAL DETERMINANTS RESOURCES

For resources and other relevant information, please visit the [Health Equity/Social Determinants Resources](#) page on the [MPCA website](#).

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](#).



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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 & Coding Channel**. Please feel free to reach out to it@mepca.org for help with joining.