

**Friday Review—3/26/21**

And here we are, Friday already. That sure seemed like a quick week! As we come to the close of another month, it is hard to believe that 2021 is already one quarter behind us.

**Easter visitation**—On a call today with the department of health, RIHCA asked about rules for Easter visitation. The quote we received was “Make a plan. Make it work.” Not very helpful, I realize. When we pushed them on it, we were told that there is no specific guidance that has been crafted for the upcoming holidays. They said our members should use the visitation guidance put out earlier this week. And they assured us they would not be holding an evening phone call on Good Friday (like last year) to go over new visitation rules.

**Vaccinations**—By now, I expect you have heard from your new vaccination partner, either Alert Ambulance or Med-Tech. Based on questions from members, RIDOH says that it is OK if you also want to continue to work with your private pharmacy contractor for these services as well.

**NHP Rates**—After an initial mix-up, Neighborhood Health Plan has agreed to increase their rates by the same 2.4% as the state Medicaid increase. This increase will be retroactive to October 1, 2020, but still no word when this will be fully implemented by NHP.

**CNA Testing**—As you know the backlog for testing CNA students who have completed their classroom and clinical work continues to grow. RIHCA has complained to the state about this on numerous occasions. Earlier this week we sent a strongly worded letter to RIDOH Director Dr. Alexander-Scott asking her to fix this backlog immediately. There are literally hundreds of qualified candidates who only need to sit for the exam in order to obtain their permanent license. A copy of this letter was also sent to Governor McKee.

**No lab testing on Saturday**—Just want to make sure you saw the memo from RIDOH today that the State Laboratories will no longer be open on Saturdays for COVID testing. This is because the number of specimens received on Saturdays has dropped dramatically. If you have an emergency and need weekend testing, call RIDOH COVID EPI at 222-8022.

**Changes to PM-1**—EOHHS is making signatory changes to the Physician’s Medical Form (PM-1). Please see the attached memo from the state for details.

**Congressional attack**—There was another hearing on nursing homes in Washington this week. This time, the House Ways and Means Committee looked at private equity ownership of nursing homes. <https://skillednursingnews.com/2021/03/house-hearing-scrutinizes-horror-of-private-equity-investment-in-nursing-homes/?euid=a3545010f7&utm_source=snn-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=8e259a95df>

**AHCA Response**—AHCA had this response after the hearing. [https://www.providermagazine.com/Breaking-News/Pages/Nursing-Home-Industry-Addresses-Congress-on-Private-Equity,-Quality-Issues.aspx](https://www.providermagazine.com/Breaking-News/Pages/Nursing-Home-Industry-Addresses-Congress-on-Private-Equity%2C-Quality-Issues.aspx)

**Medicare repayment**—Repayment of the Medicare Accelerated and Advanced Payment Program is beginning next month. <https://www.mcknightsseniorliving.com/home/news/business-daily-news/medicare-repayment-begins-in-april-for-most-ltc-operators-who-received-pandemic-loans/>

**Slow improvements**—Census is slowly starting to increase after record lows in 2020. That is the result of a national study by RIHCA’s Associate Member Clifton Larson Allen. <https://skillednursingnews.com/2021/03/we-are-in-the-turn-as-nursing-home-occupancy-creeps-up-signs-point-to-bounce-from-2020-bottom/?euid=a3545010f7&utm_source=snn-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=fb72d1f26f>

**Bingo-cize!**—A new program combining bingo and exercise is helping increase physical activity and social engagement. <https://www.mcknights.com/news/360k-federal-grant-will-bring-program-that-combines-bingo-exercise-to-24-state-nursing-homes/>

**Honor your staff**—AHCA/NCAL is announcing a new program to honor long-term care staff. There are three categories: workers in long-term care; survivors of COVID-19, employees who passed away from COVID-19. Here is a link to the program. <https://view.exacttarget.com/?qs=db116feec2b7cf973738f0a80a0767f36f9cb233d9fa05ab8c590e04e57ffd555b553780227527aeced42a8416511f54cffa9af0c0165f06a14c2d7af6c35b872467f09255ec67ed873250ea8db1bacdaf4eaab15187dc1e>

**RIHCA briefs…**

--The deadline to sign up for the PAC Calendar of Gifts is Wednesday March 31st.

--We are always looking for examples of positive public relations within our profession! We are putting together some mailers for legislators next week and are looking for positive stories from residents or family members that could be featured in one of these mailers. Contact Katie Norman for more information: knorman@rihca.com

--Don’t forget our first General Membership Meeting of the year will be held on Wednesday March 31st at 10:30am. If you can’t find the Zoom link, we will send it again next week.

Well, Spring is officially here. And that means baseball season can’t be far behind. Now that most of your NCAA brackets have been busted, it is time to move on to the next season. The Red Sox officially kick off their 2021 campaign on Thursday at home against the Baltimore Orioles. Hmmm, opening on April Fools Day….. I hope that is not an indicator of things to come.

Enjoy your weekend!