

**Friday Review—5/14/21**

Good afternoon. Happy Friday! Happy spring weekend!

**CNA licensing**—On a call with RIDOH today, we once again asked about the backlogs with testing and the issue of temporary licenses running out. We were assured today that “no one is losing their license.” Even if the 120-day period has expired, even if an employee’s license shows as “expired” on the DOH website, as long as the person is working towards getting their permanent license, they can keep working. (This will most likely only be in effect as long as the CMS waiver is in place.) When asked if we could have this in writing, we were told a report would be sent to the Governor’s office who has been making inquiries about these problems. For the record, it was RIHCA who set up a phone call with the Governor’s staff making them aware of these problems.

**Updated guidance**—On the same call today with RIDOH, we asked about the new CDC mask-wearing guidelines. It was very clearly pointed out that CDC guidelines are not RIDOH guidance. They said that the same mask-wearing guidelines are still in place for long-term care facilities. They plan to be issuing updated guidance next week with clarification for Rhode Island nursing homes and assisted living.

RIDOH also indicated they are working on updated visitation guidance for long-term care facilities. No word yet on when this will be available.

**Losing liability protection**—We have been informed by the Governor’s office that the Executive Order offering liability protection will expire at the end of this month. This was supposed to end at the end of April. RIHCA and others argued strongly for its continuation. We were granted one month and told it would not be extended after May 31st.

**Mandatory staffing legislation update**—The amended House bill 5012 was heard and passed by a Senate committee last night. It now goes to the full Senate for a vote, probably next week. RIHCA still testified against this noting the lack of adequate funding and that there just aren’t enough workers available to fill this mandate. The Senate version of this bill has been amended to match what passed in the House. This is also making its way through the legislature.

The next three stories go together and show the progression of nursing home funding in Connecticut this week.

**Connecticut funding offer**—Connecticut state officials offered $280 million to nursing homes in order to avoid multiple strikes this weekend. <https://apnews.com/article/ct-state-wire-nursing-homes-strikes-business-coronavirus-pandemic-263b3c19e9f02787b8aa28154b4164ad>

**But the union says no**—The SEIU rejected the state of Connecticut’s $280 million dollar offer saying it was not enough. <https://apnews.com/article/nursing-homes-strikes-business-government-and-politics-health-2ca55712f0cadf837822c4e625c241e2>

**Settlement reached**-- <https://www.wnpr.org/post/lamont-announces-tentative-deal-avert-nursing-home-strike-0>

**Hospital referrals**—Hospital inpatient volumes are recovering, but referrals and discharges to nursing homes continue to lag behind. <https://skillednursingnews.com/2021/05/snfs-continue-to-battle-depressed-referrals-as-hospital-inpatient-volumes-recover/?euid=a3545010f7&utm_source=snn-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=0c3fa66eab>

**A reason for the decline?**—Surgery rates are dropping for older adults, especially those over the age of 85. <https://www.mcknights.com/news/clinical-news/surgery-rates-fall-in-elders-improved-screening-may-be-reason/>

**More federal funding?**—Members of Congress are pushing for the release of the remaining money in the Provider Relief Fund. <https://www.mcknightsseniorliving.com/home/news/lawmakers-lobby-feds-to-release-remaining-provider-relief-funds-give-providers-flexibility/>

**More surveys**—The number of surveys at skilled nursing facilities have increased dramatically in the last year. <https://skillednursingnews.com/2021/05/skilled-nursing-facility-surveys-skyrocket-during-pandemic/?euid=a3545010f7&utm_source=snn-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=3025786afd>

**Weekly reporting**—CMS is requiring nursing homes to report weekly COVID-19 vaccine rates. <https://www.providermagazine.com/Breaking-News/Pages/CMS-Issues-New-Vaccine-Requirements-for-Nursing-Homes-.aspx>

Beautiful weather ahead! Tom Brady and Gronk will be bringing Tampa Bay into Foxboro in the fall. The Sox are still in first place. Life is good!

Have a great weekend!