



LPA

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

UPDATES

www.lpanet.org/covid

October 2, 2020

Breaking - just-passed - Continuing Resolution legislation signed into law last night by the president. Please let Rob know if you have any questions.

SEC. 152. (a) Funds made available in Public Law 10 113–235 to the accounts of the National Institutes of Health that were available for obligation through fiscal year 2015 and were obligated for multi-year research grants shall be available through fiscal year 2021 for the liquidation of valid obligations incurred in fiscal year 2015 if the Director of the National Institutes of Health determines the project suffered an interruption of activities attributable to SARS–CoV–2.

From Health and Human Services:

Highlight 1: Today we announced another effort to address the disparate impact of COVID-19 on minorities. This one relates to improving access to testing. NIH is empowering 31 universities and the Cherokee Nation with special grants for outreach. See below.

- **NIH to Assess and Expand COVID-19 Testing for Underserved Communities:** The NIH has awarded nearly [\\$234 million to improve COVID-19 testing for underserved and vulnerable populations](#). A part of the [Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics \(RADx\)](#) initiative, the [RADx Underserved Populations \(RADx-UP\)](#) program will support 32 institutions across the United States and will focus on populations disproportionately affected by the pandemic. These groups include African Americans, American Indians/Alaskan Natives, Latinos/Latinas, Native Hawaiians, older adults, pregnant women and those who are homeless or incarcerated.

Highlight 2: As you might expect, the COVID hit on America’s health and economy has resulted in an uptick in Medicaid and CHIP enrollments – up 5.7% from February of this year through June. See below.

- **CMS Releases Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment Trends Snapshot Showing COVID-19 Impact on Enrollment:** CMS released its first monthly Medicaid and CHIP Enrollment Trends Snapshot today. This new summary report captures impacts of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) by tracking total Medicaid and CHIP program enrollment trends for adults and children over a 12-month period. This first monthly snapshot shows over 4 million new Medicaid and CHIP enrollments between February and June 2020 – a nearly 5.7 percent increase since the PHE began in March 2020. The Enrollment Trends Snapshot will be released monthly and is available [here](#).

Funding

HHS Announces Funding for Health Information Exchanges to Support Public Health Agencies: HHS today announced today [five cooperative agreements to health information exchange organizations \(HIEs\) to help support state and local public health agencies](#) in their efforts to respond to public health

emergencies, including disasters and pandemics such as COVID-19. The HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) is administering \$2.5 million in funding from the CARES Act signed by President Trump on March 27, 2020. The funding will support local health information exchanges (HIEs) under the Strengthening the Technical Advancement and Readiness of Public Health Agencies via Health Information Exchange (STAR HIE) Program.

Testing and Treatment

Two Novel Investigational Drugs Targeting Antibiotic-Resistant Infections Move into Advanced Development with HHS Support: Two innovative, cutting-edge and potential first-in-class [investigational drugs to treat antibiotic-resistant infections will move into advanced stages of development](#) with support from the HHS. Under the partnership agreements announced today, the BARDA, part of the HHS ASPR, will provide advanced development expertise and funding to each company to support Phase 2 and Phase 3 clinical trials and other activities required to seek approval from the FDA. Antibiotic-resistant infections are a particular concern with large-scale use of antibiotics to treat secondary infections during a pandemic, such as those caused by H1N1 influenza or SARS-CoV-2, and in treating infections caused by biothreat agents, such as anthrax or tularemia, that require 60 days or more of antibiotic therapy.

- One drug candidate may restore the body's natural balance of bacteria to prevent *Clostridioides difficile* (C. difficile) infections, a serious complication of certain antibiotics or long-term antibiotic use
- Second drug candidate uses CRISPR technology, carried in a virus, to kill *Escherichia coli* (E. coli) bacteria that cause recurring or drug-resistant urinary tract infections (UTIs)

PPE

Optimizing Healthcare Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies: ASPR's Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange (TRACIE) published its [COVID-19: Optimizing Healthcare Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies webinar](#), highlighting PPE preservation strategies, trends, challenges, and lessons learned/promising practices from presenters in the public and private sectors.

NPPTL Respirator Assessments to Support the COVID-19 Response: The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH) National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory updated its [International Respirator Assessments to Support the COVID-19 Response](#). NIOSH also updated its list of [counterfeit respirators](#) and/or respirators misrepresenting NIOSH approval.

Information for Specific Populations

Information for Laboratories about COVID-19: CDC updated [resources for laboratories](#) regarding testing and lab work.

Rural Response to COVID-19: The Rural Healthcare Information Hub updated its [Rural Response to COVID-19 page](#), highlighting essential resources, tools, and training to prepare for and respond to COVID-19 in rural communities.

- [Taskforce on Telehealth Policy Findings and Recommendations](#)
- [The Impact of Coronavirus on Households Across America](#)

Research Updates

Investigational COVID-19 Vaccine Well-Tolerated and Generates Immune Response in Older Adults: A vaccine in the early phase of testing - Phase 1 - has shown that the [vaccine is well-tolerated and generates a strong immune response in older adults](#). Importantly, the immune response to the vaccine seen in older volunteers was comparable to that seen in younger age groups. The vaccine is another one by Moderna, and has been supported by the NIAID, part of the NIH. A report published today in the *New England Journal of Medicine* describes the findings from the study.

Fight the Flu: Spread the word – Getting an annual flu vaccine is more important than ever as both COVID-19 and the flu spread this fall. #FightFlu by getting vaccinated today. More info: www.vaccines.gov/flu. CDC also released a [digital media toolkit](#) for the 2020-21 flu season. The digital toolkit includes details on events/activities, sample social media and newsletter content, graphics, web assets, and media prep material. This material is downloadable, shareable, and some of the material is customizable. FDA also released multiple reasons [why it is important to get your flu vaccine](#), especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stay safe... and I welcome pictures of you all getting your flu shot!

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The banner features the LPA logo on the left, which includes the text "Over 100 Years of Supporting Science". The main text reads "LPA VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING" in large, bold letters, followed by "OCTOBER 5-6, 2020". To the right, it says "Market Analysis Networking & Socializing Keynote Speakers". At the bottom center, the website "WWW.LPANET.ORG/ANNUAL" is displayed in a yellow box.