UPDATE: #2, March 13, 2020

Membership Update – CORONAVIRUS

IT’S NOW A PANDEMIC

This week the World Health Organization announced that the spread of the Coronavirus has now reached the designation of a pandemic, triggering closures of schools, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, the U.S. and state capitols, and cancellations of large mass gatherings, including St. Patrick’s Day parades, concerts and even the remainder of the NBA and NHL seasons!

According to NPR, WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that in the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased 13-fold, and the number of affected countries has tripled. The WHO is "deeply concerned, both by the alarming levels of spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction" by world leaders in response to the outbreak. We have therefore made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic," said Ghebreyesus.

During Wednesday night’s address to the nation, President Donald Trump announced millions of dollars in aid to small businesses, which are already feeling the impact of diminishing revenue from the COVID-19 threat. Trump also announced travel restrictions from Europe that will go into effect most appropriately at midnight on Friday the 13th.

WHAT ARE HOME CARE AGENCIES EXPERIENCING?

During last week’s HCAOA Legislative Committee conference call, members shared concerns about assisted living facilities banning their home care aides from going into their clients’ residences while others expressed concern that some clients’ are stopping service because they are afraid home care aides will spread the virus. Several Advocacy Days have been cancelled as well due to state capitols restricting public meetings. Click here to see a compilation of what governors are doing to contain the threat of COVID-19.
Also, click [here](#) for a publication, *Medicaid and CHIP Coverage Learning Collaborative Inventory of Flexibilities and Authorities in the Event of a Disaster* that may be useful to home care providers doing Medicaid services.

**EDUCATE YOURSELF – BE PREPARED**

Last but not least, HCAOA members were notified yesterday that a webinar focused on what home care agencies should be doing right now in response to the COVID-19 threat is scheduled for March 19, from 1-2 pm EST. Click [here](#) to register now.

According to Executive Director Vicki Hoak, HCAOA is focused on supporting home care organizations so that they are prepared for anything that happens relating to COVID-19. “We take this responsibility very seriously and are committed to sharing up-to-the minutes news on the pandemic. This is one of many membership benefits that we are pleased to offer.”

In a [statement this week](#), HCAOA President Emma Dickison urged both clients and providers to maintain consistent lines of communication. “During times like these, useful information particularly on how our home care agencies are protecting clients as well as our workers, and preparing for emergencies, helps reduce anxiety,” said Dickison. “All of our home care agencies are encouraged to communicate routinely with clients and their families to let them know our emergency plans and what protocols we are following now to ensure the safety of client as well as our home care aides.”

“As anyone deeply involved in personal and health care knows, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” said Dickison. “Families of individuals receiving care in their home are encouraged to contact their provider with any questions they may have in case of an emergency.”