Senate Expected to Approve H.R. 6201, Families First Coronavirus Response Act

HCAOA continues to monitor fast-moving news on the COVID-19 pandemic coming out of Washington, DC as well as state capitols across the country. On March 16th, the U.S. House of Representatives made technical changes to HR 6201, the Families’ First Coronavirus Response Act, and now the Senate is expected to approve the bill by week’s end.

If passed without any changes, the legislation will go to the President containing the original provisions that mandate paid sick leave and family medical leave for employees working for companies with less than 500 employees, which would include most members of HCOA. Companies with fewer than 50 workers can claim hardship and not have to comply with the new paid sick leave and family medical leave requirements. However, according to HCAOA Executive Director Vicki Hoak, we still have an opportunity to mitigate the impact of these mandates on home care providers by advocating for things including eliminating payroll taxes for the next three months - one of many recommendations offered by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

“No matter what happens to H.R. 6201, HCAOA is still in a full-court press when it comes to making sure the administration and Congress understand the role of home care organizations in containing the spread of COVID-19, the need for flexibility in both state Medicaid regulations and licensing rules and most importantly ensuring supplies and PPE (protective personal equipment) needed for home care organizations to continue our community-based services.”
Earlier this week, HCAOA sent letters to both Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic Leader Charles Schumer emphasizing the need to rethink the financial impact of the proposed mandates on home care organizations. Members were also encouraged to send messages to their respective senators urging their support of financial relief for home care providers that will be significantly impacted by the mandates. Nearly 1,000 messages have been sent to date and HCAOA urges members who have not contacted their U.S. Senators to do so by clicking here.

State Chapters React with Outreach to Members

HCAOA chapters are also doing their part by making sure HCAOA members are updated on state actions affecting home care including loosening Medicaid state licensing regulations. To see, what state governments are doing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, click here.

In the state of Washington, which is ground zero for the coronavirus, the state chapter is holding a webinar featuring HCAOA Board Member Jeff Wiberg, who will discuss home care’s emergency planning and what organizations should be doing right now to address the virus spread. Click here to participate in the call or listen to the recording, which will be available after the call.

In Georgia, Littler Mendelson is partnering with HCAOA and myCNAJobs to host a virtual seminar on best practices in home care business, which will include plenty of information about COVID-19. The seminar occurs on March 24th; you can register by clicking here.

Tell Us! Complete the membership survey NOW

HCAOA wants to hear from you. Click here to take a brief survey that will help us in our advocacy efforts. “Definitive data on the impact of the spread of COVID-19 on our front-line workers will be critical as we continue to advocate on behalf of home care organizations,” said Patrick Cooney, HCAO’s federal lobbyist. “It will help us quantify the urgent need for supplies and PPE, how many high-risk people are being cared for at home, and the importance of home-based care. The home care industry is key to helping people remain safe during this crisis and can play a vital role as we plan for the next few weeks, when hospitals are expected to reach surge capacity and begin discharging people to their home.
Resources for Members

HCAOA is continuing to update resources for members in responding to the COVID-19 emergency. These will be updated periodically.

- Sample Emergency Triage Plan – Sample policy for evaluating your agency’s current clients and determining their acuity level/level of critical need in the event of a staffing shortage
- COVID-19 Guidance
- Letter to Clients and Families
- Coronavirus and the Workplace – Compliance Issues for Employers
- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers (CDC)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Business Preparedness
- COVID-19 Homecare and Hospice Checklist
- COVID-19 Home Care and Hospice Guidance Document
- Employer FAQs

Final Note for Today

It is more important than ever for home care agencies to have policies in place during this time. If you are reading this and your organization is still not following standard policies during a pandemic, please review the policies listed above immediately.

HCAOA is receiving calls of concerns from clients' families, asking what protocol home care agencies are following during the pandemic. Every member organization should have communicated this information to their current clients and to employees.

Other Concerns?

If you have any other concerns that are not currently being addressed, please email info@hcaoa.org