**Colorado Crisis Standards of Care**

**Palliative Care and Hospice Workgroup**

**Hospice Leadership Meeting 9/16/21**

* 7 Participants
* All meeting materials and attachments [here](http://www.nationalhospiceanalytics.com/hospice-care-products-and-services/co-crisis-standards-of-care).

**Agenda:**

1. Vaccine Mandates: From [CMS](https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-expand-vaccination-requirements-health-care-settings) (working on Interim Final Rule in Oct) and [CDPHE](http://www.nationalhospiceanalytics.com/library/CSC/CDPHE_Mandatory_Staff_Vaccination_Guidance_08.30.21.pdf) (guidance released 8/30/21, stakeholder meeting 9/20/21 – [info](https://cdphe.colorado.gov/health-facility-covid-19-response/residential-care-strike-team/response-webinars), [register here](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1_lNEc8_QLWwW8boxT6X0A)). Discussion included:
   1. Regarding the stakeholder meeting:

*The Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division (HFEMSD) has begun the permanent rulemaking process for requiring vaccination for staff in licensed healthcare settings.*

*HFEMSD will present draft permanent rule language and receive stakeholder feedback at two meetings in September starting next week. Please join us to stay informed and provide public comment during this process. A large turnout is expected for these meetings and it is unlikely that everyone who attends will be able to provide a public comment. You are encouraged to submit your written comments to cdphe.hfregs@state.co.us. Additionally, this meeting will allow for 1,000 participants. Those who are not able to participate in the meeting through Zoom can view the meeting here. Tuesday, September 14, 2021 9 - 11 a.m. Register here Monday, September 20, 2021 1 - 3 p.m.* [*Register here*](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1_lNEc8_QLWwW8boxT6X0A) *Sincerely, Office of Policy and Regulatory Development Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division*

* 1. Most hospices have at least some staff (10%-75%) who are unvaccinated.
  2. CDPHE’s rather stringent testing guidance for the unvaccinated. As testing appears to be increasing in frequency, getting test results appear to be slowing down (up until recently results were available the next day – now it’s more like 3 days). Testing tracking and reporting is requiring a lot of time.
  3. Potential for home and community-based services (including hospice) losing staff over a vaccine mandate. Sometimes unvaccinated staff need to move to less public facing roles.
  4. Challenges of hospices working with facilities regarding the facility’s vaccine mandates and protocols. Now might be a good time to discuss hospice staff entry to facilities regarding vaccine status as things might get worse in coming months. Currently it appears more facilities are allowing hospices greater access to patients.
  5. Unvaccinated staff working weekends and nights is particularly challenging, as these staff have numerous responsibilities.
  6. Unvaccinated staff in rural hospices is particularly challenging. For example, if there’s only one social worker and that person chooses not to be vaccinated – then what? If the hospice has two case managers and loses one – then what? The hospice might be out of compliance regarding staff vaccination or for not having a social worker. Recommendations included:
     1. Participate in the CDPHE stakeholder meeting above.
     2. Contact Cheryl McMahon at CDPHE ([cheryl.mcmahon@state.co.us](mailto:cheryl.mcmahon@state.co.us)) for clarification.
     3. It was also noted that final rules and details have not been released yet – perhaps there will be exception clauses.

1. [The Challenges of Providing Hospice Care in Long-Term Care Facilities During COVID-19](http://www.nationalhospiceanalytics.com/library/CSC/The_Challenges_of_Providing_Hospice_Care_in_Long-term_Care_Facilities_During_COVID-19_-_Mooney_09.14.21.pdf), [Kim Mooney, CT](mailto:kim@practically-dying.com), 720-434-5942 – paper released, linked above.
2. Open discussion, [Michelle Quinn](mailto:michelle@fremontregionalhospice.com). Discussion of providing hospice in facilities, visitation, challenges.
   1. Grand Junction / Western Slope – High COVID rates and lower vaccination rates continue. Several outbreaks in schools.
   2. Staffing is the greatest challenge right now, particularly the hiring process – people who complete applications, background checks, etc., and never show up to work. Some disciplines (e.g., Social Work and Chaplains) leaving healthcare and find jobs elsewhere. Brief discussion of working with schools to hire new graduates.
   3. Ways to support hospice, healthcare, and public health staff. While staff a year ago were “tired”, now they appear “tired and angry”. Possibilities include:
      1. A big THANK YOU still goes a long way.
      2. “Concierge Services” to encourage staff – perhaps providing a meal for the person / family, or someone to assist with errands (e.g., car wash, oil change). Something open and flexible to individual needs. Perhaps different from an ongoing task (e.g., childcare). Perhaps this would be a way to solicit community donations.
3. CHER updates, [Jean Abbott, MD MH](mailto:jean.abbott@cuanschutz.edu)
   1. Jean submitted an abstract for publication regarding Crisis Standards of Care in hospice and palliative care nationally.
4. CDPHE updates, [Jenn Klus, MPH](mailto:jenn.klus@state.co.us). Jenn has left CDPHE to work at a Denver-area hospice. We wish her success in her new endeavors!
5. CDPHE Data 9/13/21, [Cordt Kassner, PhD](mailto:ckassner@hospiceanalytics.com)
   1. Case Summary: 895 Cases reported today; 81 new hospital admits; 5.90% state positivity rate; 7585 deaths due to COVID-19.
   2. Hospice Outbreaks: 0 active hospice outbreaks; 12 resolved cases.
   3. COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan: Colorado is in Phase 2 (General public 16+).
   4. Immunized: 3.7M first doses; 3.4M fully vaccinated (64% of population; 88% of adults with at least one dose).
6. Home Care and Hospice Association of Colorado [Annual Conference](http://www.homecarehospice.civicaconferences.com/) Oct 11-12, 2021, in Keystone.

Articles for Discussion / Assistance:

1. CMS [press release](https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-expand-vaccination-requirements-health-care-settings) requiring COVID-19 vaccination of facility staff.
2. [Denver](http://www.nationalhospiceanalytics.com/library/CSC/Gov_Pollis_Board_of_Health_Letter_re_COVID_Vaccinations.pdf) Post article 8/30/21: [Colorado mandates COVID vaccines for health care workers at thousands of facilities](https://www.denverpost.com/2021/08/30/colorado-vaccine-mandate-health-care/).
3. [The Challenges of Providing Hospice Care in Long-Term Care Facilities During COVID-19](http://www.nationalhospiceanalytics.com/library/CSC/The_Challenges_of_Providing_Hospice_Care_in_Long-term_Care_Facilities_During_COVID-19_-_Mooney_09.14.21.pdf), [Kim Mooney, CT](mailto:kim@practically-dying.com)

Next Call: 10/14/21 @ 10:00-11:00 AM (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7430085211>).