

Fireside Chat Highlights – Wednesday, January 27, 2021

On January 27, 2021, LeadingAge's Janine Finck-Boyle joined experts Dr. Lee Fleisher (CMS), Jean Moody-Williams (CMS), Dr. Janell Routh (CDC), Dr. Ruth Link-Gelles (CDC), Arjun Srinivasan (CDC) and Evan Shulman (CMS) for a Fireside Chat.

Here are excerpts from their discussion:

Q. There are many questions about how soon there will be changes to guidance on visitation, testing, masking, etc. now that the vaccination is underway.

CMS and CDC are in daily conversation about this and understand how important these questions are. However, it is early. People need two doses of the vaccine, and then a 10-14 day period after the second dose before they are protected. Some people will not have received any doses for a while for a variety of reasons. And, we don't know if the vaccine prevents someone from transmitting the disease – they may still potentially be a carrier of the virus. We just don't know yet, so it is important to adhere to the current CMS/CDC guidance regarding masking, infection control, testing, visitation, etc. We look forward to changing that guidance whenever it is possible, but not yet. However, as vaccinations increase that should reduce outbreaks and cases which will, in and of itself, make for less testing and other liberalizations.

Q. What level of protection do people have after the first does of the vaccine?

We don't have data to support that one dose offers effective protection, so our message is to get the second dose and at the recommended interval. We have seen some barriers to getting the second dose on such a rigid schedule so we have relaxed slightly and are now saying that people can get the second dose up to six weeks after the first dose. But we stress that people should try to get the second dose within the prescribed window.