

## Action Checklist:

Improving the Pandemic Response to Better Support  
the Home Health Aide Workforce and the People They Serve

# What can the Local Government do?

## FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

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Recognize that home health care and the home health aide workforce are an essential part of the health care system. Home health aides allow people with long-term needs to remain safely in their homes; they enable safe transitions to home health care for people recovering after a hospital stay; they relieve the burden on hospitals, nursing homes, and family, which is of particular importance during a pandemic

Ensure that the home health aide workforce is well-supported, financially secure, respected, and prepared so that aides can fulfill their critical role of caring for patients in their homes and home health care organizations can more easily retain this vital workforce

Engage home health care and workforce leaders alongside hospitals and nursing homes to inform local pandemic planning and to ensure that home health aides needs are well represented in local emergency preparedness plans

Synchronize local pandemic preparedness planning processes and preparedness plans with state government plans

## MAJOR ACTION ITEMS

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### Improve Access to and Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Initiate outreach to state government for clear, up to date guidance on the advance stockpiling of PPE, including type, amount, and maintenance practices
- Proactively build relationships directly with home health care organizations to ensure home health care sector receives government-distributed emergency supplies
- Coordinate access points to facilitate supply distribution during a pandemic
- Help access and distribute needed supplies to home health care organizations using data collected by State Department of Health



### Promote Additional Patient and Worker Safety Practices

- Utilize industry targeted public health information messaging to encourage compliance with safety protocols for all direct care workers
- Create locally targeted public health information messaging to encourage compliance with safety protocols for patients, family, and other caregivers to keep home health aides safe when delivering services in the home



## Improve Access to Vaccination and Testing and Adherence to Guidelines

- Identify trusted local messengers for diverse audiences and develop and disseminate clear, consistent, and culturally sensitive messaging to encourage compliance and comfort with vaccination and testing guidelines
- Use multiple modalities and trusted messengers to promote vaccination information and testing recommendations (e.g., social media, town hall meetings, television, and radio public service announcements)
- Coordinate with state and federal entities to implement industry standards and mandates (i.e., uniform guidelines and expectations regarding testing and vaccination across entities including home health care, nursing homes, and hospices)
- Coordinate with federal, state, and private suppliers to facilitate distribution of tests and vaccines to local sites that are geographically accessible to widely dispersed home health aides



## Address Financial Instability & Access to Work Issues

- Identify funding sources and allocate local funds to provide quality childcare or childcare subsidies for essential workers; provide information about childcare options to home health care organizations and unions
- Provide parking passes to home health aides
- Work directly with local public transportation systems and private transportation services to insure home health aides have consistent access to low-cost or free transportation during public health emergencies (e.g., fund reduced fares for essential workers or establish non-fare time periods)
- Provide alternatives for home health aide transportation when safe public transportation is not available (e.g., subsidized use of private car services)



## Improve Communication & Emotional Support

- Identify funding sources and allocate local funds to programs and interventions to address emotional and mental health needs of home health aides during public health crises
- Develop and publicize an emotional support hotline designed for home health aides



## Support Training, Recruitment & Retention of Workforce

- Collaborate with local home health organizations to develop innovative approaches to support the home health aide workforce (e.g., prioritize access to low-cost housing, subsidize alternative pay structure demonstration pilots)
- Provide opportunities for home health organizations to raise awareness of home health aide position and recruitment efforts (e.g., job fairs)