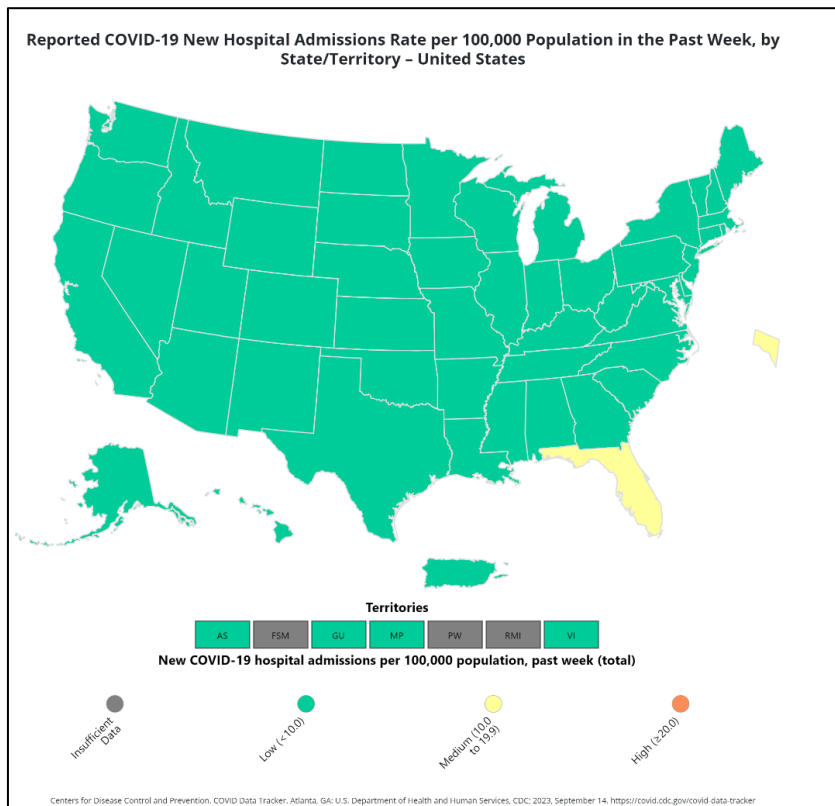




WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK?

COVID-19 Update

Did you know that the State of **Florida** has the **highest rate of hospitalizations for COVID-19 in the United States** according to the CDC? The Florida Department of Health reported 23,960 new cases for the week of August 25, up from 7,320 the week of June 23 (click [HERE](#)). The latest CDC data shows that new hospital admissions due to COVID-19 in Florida increased from 951 on July 1 to 2,536 as of September 2. To go to the CDC COVID Data Tracker, click [HERE](#).



Florida
Data through: Sep 02 2023
New hospital admissions of confirmed COVID-19, past week (total): 2,536
% Change in hospital admissions from prior week: 4.4%
New COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100,000 population, past week (total): 11.81
Total hospital admissions since August 2020: 568,353



This week, the CDC published updated guidelines for the FDA approved updated COVID-19 vaccine and manufacturers of the updated vaccine will make them available to the public this week.

The National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions released only an hour ago, a two-page guidance on this new guidelines based on feedback from their Coalition Health Advisory Council members. Karen van Caulil, Florida Alliance

President and CEO, and Rosa Novo, Florida Alliance Board Chair, have served on this advisory council for the past three years. Click [HERE](#) for the infographic.

Here is a summary of important information we have also gathered from the CDC and from the Health Action Alliance:

- The CDC recommends **everyone six months and older get the updated vaccine** as soon as possible. The latest mRNA vaccine is monovalent in nature, designed to protect against one variant (XBB1.5), a variant of Omicron that emerged earlier in the year.
- **Technically speaking, the shot is no longer a “booster.”** Think of it like the annual flu shot that is updated annually to match the current strain of the disease.
- The updated vaccine is **administered in one shot, not a series** as it has in the past.
- Older adults and people with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe COVID-19 illness and should make sure they get the updated COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.
- **Employers should check with their respective carrier to determine if the cost of the updated vaccine is covered for employees and covered members.**
- The benefits to obtaining the vaccine continue to outweigh risks and vaccination is the best avenue for protection from severe illness and hospitalization.
- Employers **may want to consider incentives** to increase the percentage of people who obtain the updated vaccine, such as prizes, rewards, or modest financial incentives.
- Employers should also do their part in **helping people find a place to receive the updated vaccine**. It may not be as readily available as it has in the past because the organizations dispensing the vaccines are not receiving them free of charge any longer (we are no longer in a public health emergency). Vaccines.gov has a “Find COVID-19 Vaccines” that is being updated for the new shots. Click [HERE](#). Please give it a few days to update since it currently has the availability of the old shots.
- **Employers should also encourage their covered members to obtain the new immunizations for flu and RSV**, as well, which can help prevent a “triple-demic” of respiratory infections.
- The CDC estimates that people should be able to start making appointments within the next week to obtain the updated vaccine.
- Free COVID-19 tests are still available at [thousands of locations](#) across the country.

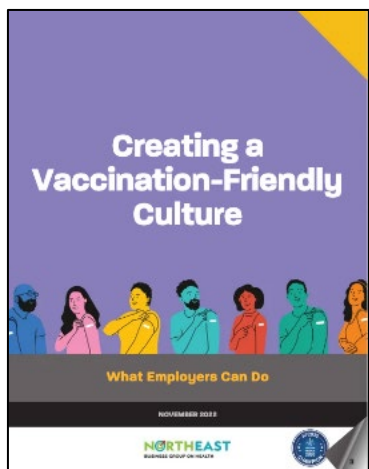
The updated CDC guidance can be found [HERE](#).

Please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions or need additional information.

Immune Fitness & Vaccination: Overcoming Misinformation and Trust Issues

Due to the new CDC guidance and updated COVID-19 vaccine and new flu and RSV vaccines, we are sharing this piece, originally posted in the March 13, 2023 Weekly Bulletin. **Employers are in a unique position to increase trust in the science of vaccines and improve vaccination rates as part of their efforts to promote health and wellbeing among employees and family members.** On March 9, the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions held a webinar on this topic.

Click [here](#) to listen to the recording and download the presentation.



Click on the image to the left for actionable resources from our sister coalition, the Northeast Business Group on Health. The Florida Alliance staff participated in the development of this report.

You can also find the link to this report on our [Disease Prevention and Management](#) webpage.



Employer Member Educational Programs, Reports, Resources, And Employer Learning Collaboratives (ELC)

COMING NEXT WEEK! Oncology Employer Learning Collaborative (ELC) Kickoff Meeting – Tuesday, September 19, 10:30AM – 12:00PM ET

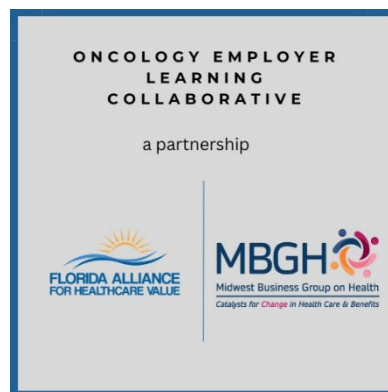
Don't forget! The Florida Alliance, in partnership with the Midwest Business Group on Health, is kicking off an important series of webinars, our 2023 Oncology Employer Learning Collaborative, on Tuesday, September 19th.

The first webinar will focus on prevention, screening, early identification, diagnosis, and site of care strategies.

Save the date for the additional sessions:

- Session #2 – Tuesday, October 17, 2:00PM - 3:30PM ET
- Session #3 – Friday, November 17, 2:00PM – 3:30PM ET
- Final Session – Friday, December 8, 3:30PM – 5:00PM ET

The calendar invitation for Session #2 will be coming soon.



Thanks to Affiliate Members Genentech, Merck, and Pfizer for their support of this initiative.

If you need additional information, please contact Lisa Hain at lisa@flhealthvalue.org

Complimentary Registration Available for 2023 National Alliance Annual Forum – November 13-15, 2023

The National Alliance’s Annual Forum will be held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia, November 13-15, 2023. **Temperature Rising: Igniting Change for a New Era** brings together healthcare innovators and influencers to share industry insights, covering the top-of-mind opportunities and challenges facing employers and other healthcare purchasers today – and into the future.



The National Alliance is pleased to offer complimentary registrations (\$1,500 value) to ten employer members from each coalition member. Registration is first come, first served, so make sure to take advantage of this opportunity. To register and learn more about the Annual Forum, please click [HERE](#).

Please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Thank You to Our Renewing Member! Affiliate Member – PeopleOne Health



Welcome to our new Affiliate Members – Truveris, and WellDyne

[Truveris](#) is a pharmacy benefits procurement and insights platform, combining technology and expertise to revolutionize access and affordability of prescription drugs.

As pharmacy experts, they provide everything you need to effectively monitor, measure, and manage pharmacy benefits. Using data-driven transparency and insights, Truveris works across the entire pharmacy chain to expose what is hidden, untangle what is confusing, and weed out what is distracting.



Armed with the most information allows you to make truly informed decisions about affordable access to health care that helps people lead more productive lives.

For more information, contact Jenna Romeo, Director of Market Development, jromeo@truveris.com



[WellDyne](#) is a disruptive force driving meaningful change within pharmacy benefits. For 30 years, WellDyne has leveraged their clinical expertise to drive improved health outcomes for their clients and members. Now, they have scaled their business, added a deep commitment to innovation and are prepared to challenge the status quo in this industry. They are on a quest to fill the gap that exists today for PBM options serving the middle market. They offer the lowest net-cost solutions, highest-touch customer service and best-possible clinical results.

WellDyne has grown to partner with more than 2,000 clients, serve more than 3 million members, built the capacity to fulfill more than 15 million prescriptions per year, and established a wholly owned, award-winning specialty pharmacy.

They are determined to remove obstacles and solve issues that stand in the way of better pharmacy care and are engaging patients to embrace the power of medications to manage their health conditions while empowering pharmacy benefit plans with analytics and insights.

Contact Stephen Saft, Chief Executive Officer at ssaft@welldyne.com for more information.



In Case You Missed It

Leapfrog Statement on Recommendations to President Biden on Patient Safety

On September 7 the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology issued a [report](#) recommending President Biden take actions to transform patient safety. **The patient safety problem is estimated to be the third leading cause of death in the country, exceeded only by cancer and heart disease but with no one individual or government agency responsible for solving it.**



The Leapfrog Group, in a statement on recommendations to President Biden, applauds the President's Council and its working group on patient safety for its groundbreaking report which puts a priority on one of the most devastating issues in American health care.

The Florida Alliance, as regional leader for The Leapfrog Group, is excited to see these recommendations on the President's desk, because they have the potential to make patient safety a much higher priority for policymakers and the healthcare industry.

Read the full statement from Leah Binder, President and CEO of The Leapfrog Group by clicking [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Tait-Dinger at ashley@flhealthvalue.org, our Regional Leader for The Leapfrog Group.

The Role of Employers in Addressing Quality Variation in Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance

The use of cost and quality of care data, in conjunction with novel analytical approaches, can assist employers in designing high-quality and economically efficient health benefits according to a new article published in the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) Catalyst*. Variation in provider quality is a driver of poor health outcomes, missed opportunities for life-saving treatment, and unnecessary utilization, and has historically been very difficult to measure. **This article addresses how new data approaches are available to employers to evaluate and act on provider quality metrics.**



The authors used data from Embold Health, a Florida Alliance Affiliate Member, to show how employers can identify and match high-quality providers with covered members. The continued progress towards price and care transparency offers opportunities for employers to leverage their data to curate a provider network that provides high quality care at a fair price. Provider quality can be integrated into network design as well as potentially incentivize covered members to choose the high-quality providers through low out-of-pocket payment options, ensuring employers can rein in costs while ensuring covered members receive clinically meaningful care. The *NEJM Catalyst* article can be found [HERE](#).

Thank you to Florida Alliance Board Member Mark Weinstein of ICUBA for sharing this article with us!

Please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org if you have any questions.

Vote for Modern Healthcare 100 Most Influential People List



Modern Healthcare has opened public voting for its 22nd Annual “100 Most Influential People in Healthcare” awards. It is a recognition program that honors individuals in health care deemed by their peers and the senior editors of *Modern Healthcare* to be the most influential individuals in the industry in terms of leadership and impact.

Among the nominees are purchasers and patient safety advocates, including The Leapfrog Group’s CEO, Leah Binder. We hope you will consider voting for Leah because of her important role in promoting transparency of patient safety and quality data and information.

FYI -- the Florida Alliance is frequently identified as the most engaged Regional Leader for Leapfrog in the U.S. The role we play in Florida is critically important, promoting transparency of quality and patient safety.

300 people have been nominated, and you can vote for up to ten individuals. **The last day to vote is coming up soon - next Monday September 18th.** The link to vote with the list of nominees can be found [HERE](#).

If you have any questions, please contact Karen van Caulil at karen@flhealthvalue.org. Karen is newly appointed to The Leapfrog Group Board of Directors.