

MELICK & PORTER, LLP COVID-19 MEMO:

Melick & Porter, LLP provides you with the below update regarding the impact of COVID-19 on issues relating to insurance in the United States. The below is not meant to be all-inclusive, but provides an overview as to the trends in the United States. If you have any questions regarding any of the updates below, please do not hesitate to contact us.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT LEGISLATION AND EMERGENCY ORDERS AND DIRECTIVES:

Below we provide an overview as to the types of legislative actions that have been occurring, both on a federal and state level.

- The University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation [updated](#) its forecast to include the variants first found in the U.K. and South Africa for the first time. Both have been detected in the U.S. It increased its previous death toll estimate by about 25,000 to more than 594,000 by May 1, 2021.
- The city of Boston will enter Phase 3, Step 1 of Massachusetts' COVID-19 reopening process on February 1, 2021. Meaning gyms, movie theaters and other businesses will be able to open their doors, Mayor Marty Walsh said on January 26, 2021.
- President Biden signed an executive order [expanding](#) the scope of nutrition assistance programs, an effort to address a growing hunger crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and heightening worker protections. The executive order would re-interpret rules already in law, making benefits more generous. The order would also expand the Emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- On January 22, 2021, the White House [released](#) its 198-page COVID-19 strategy. The strategy is organized around the following seven goals:
 - Restore trust with the American people;
 - Mount a safe, effective, and comprehensive vaccination campaign;
 - Mitigate spread through expanding masking, testing, treatments, data, health care workforce, and clear public health standards;
 - Immediately expand emergency relief and exercise the Defense Production Act;
 - Safely reopen schools, businesses, and travel while protecting workers;
 - Protect those most at risk and advance equity, including across racial, ethnic, and rural/urban lines; and
 - Restore U.S. leadership globally and build better preparedness for future threats.

- Moderna and Pfizer need to nearly [double](#) their COVID-19 vaccine deliveries to meet their distribution goals in coming months. In the last few weeks, they've each been steadily delivering about 4.3 million doses a week, according to an *NPR* examination of [vaccine allocation data](#).
- On January 21, 2021, President Biden issued an [Executive Order](#) calling for increased federal emphasis on worker safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - In relevant part, the Executive Order instructs OSHA to take the following steps:
 - Within two weeks, issue revised guidance on COVID-19 workplace safety in consultation with other appropriate federal agencies;
 - Consider whether emergency temporary workplace safety standards on COVID-19 are necessary, and if they are, issue them by 15 March;
 - Review OSHA enforcement efforts to identify any necessary changes to better protect workers and ensure equity in enforcement;
 - Focus OSHA enforcement on violations that put the largest number of workers at risk of COVID-19; and
 - Conduct a multilingual outreach effort to inform workers of their rights.

INSURANCE AND COVERAGE RELATED NEWS AND ORDERS/LEGISLATION:

Below we provide an update as to regulations, news, and litigation specifically related to insurance and potential coverage.

- Insurers increased their use of catastrophe models, drones and mobile apps during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they anticipate growth in such technology to continue once the health crisis passes.

Some growth in what is known as [“insurtech”](#) was driven by the social distancing measures and quarantines that accompanied the pandemic, while adoption of other technologies came despite it.

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE NEWS AND LEGISLATION RELATED TO COVID-19:

Below we discuss news regarding the economic impact of COVID-19 and measures being taken to address that.

- COVID-19 reached every [county](#) in the United States in 2020 according to a *Wall Street Journal* analysis.

- The Internal Revenue Service released an advance version of [Notice 2021-10](#) providing additional relief for “qualified opportunity funds” and their investors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LITIGATION/CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM UPDATES AND ORDERS:

Below we, highlight additional judicial orders and trends related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Public hours at Maine courthouses remain reduced in response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. [Remote proceedings](#) will continue as scheduled and certain documents may be filed by email. See [PMO-SJC-3](#) and [PMO-SJC-3A](#).
- On January 29, 2021, the Supreme Court of New Hampshire issued the [Fifteenth Amended Order Suspending In-Person Court Proceedings at New Hampshire Circuit Court](#).
- On January 28, 2021, the Supreme Court of New Hampshire issued the [Fifteenth Amended Order Suspending In-Person Court Proceedings at New Hampshire Superior Court](#).
- On January 28, 2021, the Supreme Court of New Hampshire issued the [Fifteenth Amended Order Suspending In-Person Court Proceedings at New Hampshire Supreme Court](#).
- On January 26, 2021, the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch issued an [Amendment to the Rules of Appellate Procedure](#).
- On January 29, 2021, the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch issued a [Notice of Livestreaming of on the Record Virtual Civil and Housing Court Proceedings](#).