

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.

- President Biden on March 16, 2021, began what is expected to be a weeks-long sales [pitch](#) regarding the new coronavirus relief package.
- The Federal Aviation Administration is extending its zero-tolerance policy for disruptive [behavior](#) on flights amid a rash of unruly passenger refusals to wear anti-coronavirus masks.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued stronger worker safety guidance on COVID-19 prevention and risk identification processes, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.
 - The additional [guidance](#), which updated recommendations and outlines existing safety and health standards, is not a standard or regulation, nor does it create new legal obligations, OSHA reported.
- The Food and Drug Administration will [allow](#) some developers of Covid-19 tests to market their products for regular at-home use without first studying how well the tests perform in people without symptoms.
- Moderna has begun testing its COVID-19 vaccine on [children](#) and infants between the ages of six months and 12 years as the drugmaker seeks to expand approval for its vaccine to children.
- National Institutes of Health official Dr. Anthony Fauci said that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is examining a new study indicating that social [distancing](#) measures could be just as effective at 3 feet as at 6 feet.
- The White House is preparing to [launch](#) a new campaign to tackle the issue of vaccine hesitancy as the Biden administration works to administer shots to all Americans by May 1, 2021.

- Most people who have received their first dose of the coronavirus vaccine from Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna are receiving the second dose [on time](#), according to new research from the CDC.
- On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the “[American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#)” into law. The Act provides \$1.9 trillion in funding, program changes, and tax policies aimed at mitigating the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Unlike past COVID-related stimulus packages, the Act focuses particularly on funding state and local governments, schools, and individuals, though it also contains relief for private companies, especially small businesses.

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.

- Senator Bob Menendez has reintroduced the [Clarity Law Around Insurance of Marijuana](#) “CLAIM Act,” which, if passed, would help legal marijuana and related businesses access comprehensive and affordable insurance coverages including workers’ comp, property, casualty and title insurance.
 - The CLAIMS Act aims to ensure marijuana and related businesses can access comprehensive and affordable coverages.

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.

- U.S. Treasury officials [say](#) the new round of stimulus checks from the \$1.9 American Rescue Plan Act will go out immediately, with some Americans receiving them as early as this coming weekend.
- On March 15, 2021, the IRS issued a [reminder](#) about electronic filing of Form 990-T. The “Taxpayer First Act” expanded the use of electronic systems, including a requirement that certain exempt organizations are to file information and tax returns electronically for tax years beginning after July 1, 2019.
- Congressional Democrats are [urging](#) the U.S. Treasury Department and IRS to “take every effort” to implement a new tax exemption for unemployment benefit recipients.

LITIGATION/CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM UPDATES AND ORDERS:

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

- On March 15, 2021, the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch has released a video regarding [Connecticut's New Family Court Process](#).
- All New Hampshire Judicial Branch courts are open during regular business hours. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public access to courthouses and/or clerk's offices continues to be restricted.
- The Judicial Branch has released the [State of Maine Judicial Branch COVID-19 Phased Management Plan](#) (updated March 15, 2021) The plan creates a five-phased process for reopening Maine Courts and is based on the most recent scientific data available from the Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and stakeholder input. [Read the Plan](#).