

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 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission announced it will hold its first all virtual Commission on April 28, 2021 to consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers, the difficulties faced by employers in navigating potential discrimination issues, and future challenges the pandemic may present for both employees and employers.
- In the U.S. [222 million vaccine doses](#) have been given thus far. In the last week, an average of 2.86 million vaccine doses per day were administered. At the current pace, it will take approximately another three months to cover 75% of the U.S. population.
 - Every [state](#) in the U.S. has opened vaccine eligibility to all adults, meeting a deadline set earlier this month by President Joe Biden.
 - The U.S. currently has [75,000 vaccination](#) sites and 90% of American live within five miles of a vaccination site.
- The U.S Senate passed [S.937](#) COVID-19 Hates Crimes Act targeting anti-Asian hate crimes after an uptick of incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [bill](#) passed with bipartisan support and moves to the House of Representatives for a floor vote.
- [President Biden](#) announced a paid tax leave credit for employers with fewer than 500 employees to provide full pay to employees for any time off needed to get vaccinated and recover from the after-effects of the vaccination.
- U.S. vaccine advisers have now identified 15 people who suffered rare blood clots linked to the [Johnson & Johnson](#) COVID-19 vaccine.
- The number of Massachusetts communities at [high risk](#) for COVID-19 has dropped for the second consecutive week. 47 communities were in the red zone down from 59 last week according to [state](#) data.

- Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont [announced](#) plans to eliminate most of the state's COVID-19 restrictions for every sector by May 19, 2021 with the exception of certain mask requirements that will remain in effect.

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.

- [Employee benefits](#) are changing as a result of the pandemic with greater focus on: employee financial health, including implementation of financial wellness benefits, flexible benefits options, and increased online benefits and virtual open enrollment.

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.

- The [SBA](#) will reopen the [Shuttered Venue Operators Grant](#) application portal on April 24, 2021 for operators of live venues and promoters to apply for economic relief.
- The [Treasury Department](#) and Internal Revenue Service issued [Revenue Procedure \(2021-20\)](#) for certain business that received first-round Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, but did not deduct original eligible expenses prior to tax relief legislation passed in 2020.
- The IRS, Department of Treasury, and Bureau of Fiscal Service announced they are disbursing nearly [two million](#) payments in the sixth batch of Economic Impact Payments.
- Massachusetts remains in Phase IV, Step 1. Learn more about reopening Massachusetts here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts>

LITIGATION/CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM UPDATES AND ORDERS:

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

- [Per Amended Emergency Orders](#), the New Hampshire Supreme Court will serve as a pilot location for expansion of in-person operations for increased public access to judicial branch facilities beginning April 27, 2021.
- The State of Connecticut Judicial Branch continues to advise that Jurors scheduled to appear in a Connecticut courthouse from now until May 31, 2021, should not report. Their jury service has been cancelled.

- Public hours at Maine courthouses will continue to be reduced in response to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. Unless a court is closed due to inclement weather, [remote proceedings](#) will continue as scheduled. See the [Maine Courts Response to COVID-19](#) for more information.
- State Guidance on Foreclosure proceedings:
 - Connecticut - <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Office-of-the-Governor/Executive-Orders/Lamont-Executive-Orders/Executive-Order-No-10A.pdf>
 - Rhode Island
<https://www.courts.ri.gov/Courts/SupremeCourt/SupremeExecOrders/20-12.pdf>
 - Massachusetts - [COVID-19 Eviction Information / Reliance on CDC Federal Moratorium through 06.30.2021](#)
 - New Hampshire - <https://courts-state-nh-us.libguides.com/evictions>