

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 Department of Health and Human Services [announced](#) it will be allocating \$250 million in federal grants to local governments to address COVID-19 safety and vaccinations in minority communities.
- The number of drug company [inspections](#) conducted by the Food and Drug Administration has dropped significantly due to the pandemic, resulting in a delay of new drug approvals.
- Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker's administration is moving ahead with its [plan](#) to order all K-8 public schools in Massachusetts in hybrid or remote learning models due to the pandemic to resume in-person classes five days a week by next month.
- New York New York is [expanding](#) vaccine eligibility to everyone over the age of 60 beginning March 10, 2021, officials announced. Previously, only residents 65 and up, as well as certain essential workers and people with specific certain underlying conditions were eligible for the vaccine.
- On February 22, 2021, the Biden Administration released a [fact sheet](#) that instructs the Small Business Administration to increase lending to small businesses in need through the Paycheck Protection Program with the goal of changing the PPP to further promote equitable access to relief.
- On March 10, 2021, The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Senate-amended version of [H.R. 1319](#), the "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021."
- On March 9, 2021, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced new [guidelines](#) for vaccinated Americans.

- With approximately 10 % of Americans vaccinated and large quantities of shots now in supply, the Biden Administration is now having to contend with [how](#) to achieve “herd immunity” when a portion of the U.S.’s population is hesitant to get the vaccine.

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.

- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. property/casualty (P/C) industry improved its overall profitability in 2020, with a 68% increase in net underwriting income and combined ratio that improved slightly over the previous year.

These preliminary results are from a new Best’s Special Report, titled, [“First Look: 12 Month 2020 Property/Casualty Financial Results.”](#)

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.

- On March 3, 2021, the Division of Examinations of the Securities and Exchange Commission announced its [2021 Examination Priorities](#). The priorities are designed to provide industry participants insight into the Division’s risk-based approach to examinations and the areas it currently believes present potential risks to investors and the U.S. capital markets.

LITIGATION/CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM UPDATES AND ORDERS:

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

- The Massachusetts Juvenile Court has added [Standing Order 2-21](#) (adopted March 10, 2021; effective March 12, 2021).
 - In accordance with the SJC’s Fifth Updated Order, beginning on March 1, 2021, Phase 2 jury trials as detailed in the SJC’s Fifth Updated Order and the Jury Management Advisory Committee (“JMAC”) Report and Recommendations on the Resumption of Jury Trials (July 31, 2020) shall commence in the Juvenile Court.
- On March 4, 2021, the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch noted Chief Justice Richard A. Robinson’s announcement of Carl Cicchetti becoming Chief Clerk of the Supreme and Appellate Courts, effective April 1, 2021, succeeding Carolyn C. Ziogas, who is retiring.

- On March 11, 2021, the Supreme Court of New Hampshire issued the following orders governing proceedings in each Court:
 - [3-11-21 Seventeenth Renewed and Amended Emergency Order Governing Supreme Court Proceedings;](#)
 - [3-11-21 Seventeenth Renewed and Amended Order Suspending In-Person Court Proceedings Relating to Superior Court;](#) and
 - [3-11-21 Seventeenth Renewed and Amended Order Suspending In-Person Court Proceedings Relating to Circuit Court..](#)