April 13, 2020

ILLINOIS HEALTH AND HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Executive Officers, Member Hospitals and Health Systems
    Chief Operating Officers
    Chief Medical Officers
    Chief Nursing Officers
    Chief Quality Officers
    Chief Financial Officers
    Emergency Preparedness Contacts
    Emergency Department Directors
    Behavioral Constituency Section
    Government Relations Personnel
    In-House Counsel
    Public Relations Directors

FROM: A.J. Wilhelmi, President & CEO
      Tim Nuding, Senior Vice President, Member Services & Corporate Finance
      Keneatha Johnson, Director, Quality, Safety, and Health Policy

SUBJECT: IHA COVID-19 Update – April 13, 2020

Following is a brief recap of today’s top developments.

Situational Awareness
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced 1,173 new COVID-19 cases and 74 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 22,025 in 87 counties, with a total of 794 deaths.

Rural Hospitals’ COVID-19 Testing
Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Ngozi Ezike, M.D., recently announced hospitals in counties that IDPH considers rural and Critical Access Hospitals can submit COVID-19 specimens to the state’s Carbondale laboratory for testing to reduce the wait time for results. Turn-around time will vary depending on the lab’s workload, but the lab is aiming to maintain a turn-around time of no more than three days. See an IHA memo for more details.

IHA Launches Healthcare Heroes Webpage
The heroic efforts of Illinois hospitals, health systems and frontline staff are the focus of IHA’s new webpage, Healthcare Heroes, launched Friday on the homepage of IHA’s website. This online strategy is part of IHA’s “Going the Distance” statewide campaign to thank Illinois’s healthcare heroes for their swift response to COVID-19 and unparalleled dedication to patients during this unprecedented public health crisis. We ask members to submit your hospital’s stories, pictures and videos to Valerie Culver,
Chicago Effort to Support the Homeless
Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the implementation and mobilization of a citywide system to prevent transmission and respond to cases of COVID-19 among individuals experiencing homelessness. The Chicago Dept. of Public Health (CDPH) has arranged for nurse visits at all shelters across the city to provide in-person education and screenings. Additionally, CDPH will pair community-based providers with local shelters for ongoing clinical support – building a new network of care for the homeless that will extend beyond this outbreak.

Containment strategies depend on the ability to rapidly identify and address cases in congregate settings. With support from the University of Illinois Health and Rush University Medical Center, more than 700 shelter residents and staff can now be tested for COVID-19 each week. CDPH and medical student volunteers from Rush University Medical Center have distributed more than 25,000 pieces of personal protective equipment (PPE) donated by Project HOPE to shelter residents and staff, as well as Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) outreach teams.

Healthcare Providers Covered in Workers’ Compensation Emergency Amendment
The Illinois Workers’ Compensation Commission has issued a notice of an emergency amendment concerning the COVID-19 pandemic:

“The rapid spread of COVID-19 and uncertainty created within regulated industry has necessitated the modification of evidentiary rules regarding practice before the Commission to ensure first responders and front line workers, who are most susceptible to exposure to COVID-19, are afforded the full protections of the Workers’ Compensation Act in the event they are exposed to or contract the virus.”

Among first responders and front line workers, the Commission includes: “Any individuals employed as police, fire personnel, emergency medical technicians, or paramedics and all individuals employed and considered as first responders, health care providers engaged in patient care...”

Unemployment Application Processing Update
At his daily press briefing, Governor J.B. Pritzker outlined steps and upgrades the Illinois Dept. of Employment Security (IDES) has taken to expedite unemployment application processing. The Governor said that from March 1 to April 4, Illinois received 513,173 initial unemployment claims, which is greater than the total number of initial claims for 2019 (489,831) and five times greater than the claims filed in the first five weeks of the 2008 great recession.

Updated IHA Federal Resource Documents
Today, IHA released an updated version of the Federal Funding Opportunities Resource Document. The document lists federal resources for which hospitals and health systems may apply to assist with increased costs and financial losses due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Updates include new information on the distribution of payments to hospitals from the CARES Act, application information for the Telehealth Program funds offered through the Federal Communications Commission, and new and expanded loan terms announced by the Federal Reserve to assist borrowers of all sizes. The Federal Funding Opportunities Resource Document, along with IHA’s companion document, Automatic Federal Fiscal Relief Resource Document, is available on IHA’s dedicated COVID-19 website.

Federal COVID-19 Commercial Payer Guidance
On April 11, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Labor, and Treasury issued guidance for commercial payers on implementation of the

Specifically, the announcement implements the requirement for group health plans and group and individual health issuers to cover - without cost sharing - both diagnostic testing and certain related items and services provided during urgent care visits, emergency room visits, and in-person or telehealth visits to the doctor’s office to determine the need for or result in an order for COVID-19 testing. An IHA memo highlights key pieces of this guidance, including covered group health plans and health insurance issuers, in- and out-of-network provider reimbursement requirements, covered items and services, and cost-sharing and utilization management prohibitions.

**CMS Office Hours Tuesday**
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will hold their next installment of office hours on April 14 from 4-5 p.m. CT. The purpose of CMS office hours is to allow hospitals, health systems and providers to ask questions regarding CMS actions to increase flexibilities during the COVID-19 public health emergency. To join the call, dial 833-614-0820, passcode: 2395745. Alternatively, you can join via audio webcast [here](#).

**COCA Call on COVID-19 Mortality Thursday**
A CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) call on April 16 from 1-2 p.m. (CDT) will provide an overview of the importance of mortality data, discuss the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Vital Statistics Reporting Guidance document for those who may need to certify a death involving COVID-19, and present a summary of COVID-19 surveillance through the NVSS. Details on how to access the call can be found [here](#).

**SIREN**
To register for the State of Illinois Rapid Electronic Notification System (SIREN), go to [https://siren.illinois.gov/agreement.php](https://siren.illinois.gov/agreement.php) or email [dph.siren@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.siren@illinois.gov)

**Resources**
- [IDPH webpage on COVID-19](https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid-19)
- [Illinois COVID-19 website for the public - coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://www.coronavirus.illinois.gov)
- [IHA webpage on COVID-19](https://www.team-iha.org/covid-19)

If you have questions or comments, please contact Tim Nuding, Senior Vice President, Member Services and Corporate Finance at 217-541-1164 or tnuding@team-iha.org