



April 14, 2021

**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 14, 2021

Following is a brief recap of the most recent top developments.

Situational Awareness – Virus vs. Vaccine

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today 3,536 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases and 31 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 1,288,934 with a total of 21,570 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 88,390 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 4.0%. The preliminary 7-day statewide positivity rate for *cases* as a percent of total tests from April 7-13 is 4.2%, and the seven-day *test* positivity rate is 5.0%. Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours increased from 2,028 patients to 2,076 patients (double the level from one month ago). Of that figure, 453 were in the ICU, with 198 patients on ventilators.

A total of 7,482,650 vaccines have been administered in Illinois as of last midnight. More than 3 million Illinoisans (nearly 24% of the population) have been fully vaccinated. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 132,810 doses. Yesterday, 138,538 doses were reported administered.

Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 Vaccine on Pause – State Updates Vaccination Plans

On Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a joint statement recommending a pause in the use of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. CDC also issued a Health Alert with recommendations for clinicians, public health and the public. CDC and FDA are reviewing data involving six reported U.S. cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot (cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) with thrombocytopenia) in individuals after receiving the J&J vaccine. Nationally, more than 6.8 million J&J vaccine doses have been administered, including about 290,000 doses in Illinois or just 4% of all COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the state.

At an emergency meeting this afternoon, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) postponed a vote on making recommendations to CDC on the J&J vaccine in order to obtain more data and further evaluate the vaccine's safety, risks and benefits. ACIP is next scheduled to meet May 5 but could reconvene sooner in another emergency meeting to discuss and vote on recommendations.

CDC will hold a Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) call this Thursday (April 15) at 1 p.m. CDT to present the latest evidence on CVST associated with the administration of the J&J vaccine

and discuss the importance of early detection and updated vaccine recommendations. [Click here](#) for webinar link and dial-in information.

The [Illinois](#), [Chicago](#) and [Cook County](#) Departments of Public Health and local health departments across the state are following the CDC/FDA guidance. IDPH has [updated](#) its vaccination plans, moving forward with COVID-19 vaccinations statewide, including ongoing communication with all providers about the J&J vaccine pause and the transfer of 50,000 doses of Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to Chicago. [IDPH says the pause on the J&J vaccine will not have a large impact on state vaccination efforts](#). IDPH also says providers in Illinois should immediately report any suspect cases to their local health department, even if the case occurred in the past after receiving the J&J vaccine, and that local health departments should promptly report any suspect cases to IDPH.

To further expand availability of the COVID-19 vaccine, Governor J.B. Pritzker today [announced](#) an additional state mass vaccination site in Cook County -- the former Target location in Matteson -- that will open to all eligible Illinois residents on Thursday, April 15. As of Monday, April 12, all Illinois residents age 16 and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine with nearly 19,000 residents receiving vaccinations at state mass vaccination sites in the first 24 hours of universal vaccine eligibility.

President Signs Medicare Sequestration Relief Bill

This afternoon, President Biden signed IHA-supported legislation ([H.R. 1868](#)) to suspend 2% Medicare sequester cuts through the end of 2021. The bill, which overwhelmingly passed the U.S. House of Representatives last night, also includes important technical corrections to the rural health clinic provisions in the [Consolidated Appropriations Act](#), which passed in December. The provision delaying Medicare sequester cuts is based on legislation ([H.R. 315](#) - "[The Medicare Sequester COVID Moratorium Act](#)") introduced by [Rep. Brad Schneider](#) (IL-10), who also led the previous delay of the across-the-board cuts to providers.

HFS Reminder: CARES Program Reporting Deadline This Friday

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) has issued an [alert](#) to subrecipients reminding them that the reporting deadline is this Friday (April 16) for the HFS CARES Program supported by the CARES Act Department of Treasury Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). As stated in HFS' previous provider notice dated [March 11, 2021](#), subrecipients must submit the final reporting template and the supporting documentation to HFS. Failure to submit final reporting may result in non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the subaward agreement and in the Department taking action, including the potential recoupment of all funds received by the subrecipient. Post-award reporting will occur through the [HFS CARES Portal](#).

COVID-19 Lump Sum Payments for RHCs and FQHCs

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is making up-front payments to rural health clinics (RHCs) and federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) for administering COVID-19 vaccines in advance of cost report settlement. RHCs and FQHCs may request a lump sum adjustment through their Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC). CMS payments cover COVID-19 vaccines and administration at 100% reasonable cost like influenza and pneumonia vaccines. RHCs or FQHCs with National Government Services (NGS) as their MAC should submit a request for lump sum adjustment to NGSReimbursement@anthem.com. Requests must include certain information, including either flu and pneumococcal vaccine costs from an entity's most recent cost report, or 60 to 90 days of actual COVID-19 vaccine and administration cost data. More information is available on the NGS [website](#).

FDA: Transition from Decontaminated Disposable Respirators

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is [recommending](#) healthcare personnel and facilities transition away from crisis capacity conservation strategies, such as decontaminating or bioburden reducing disposable respirators for reuse. Based on the increased domestic supply of new respirators approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) currently available to facilitate this transition, the FDA and CDC believe there

is adequate supply of respirators to transition away from use of decontamination and bioburden reduction systems. CDC/NIOSH has also updated its *Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators* to clarify the application of surge capacity strategies.

CDC on Disparities in COVID-19 ED Visits, Hospitalizations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued new *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports* on continuing racial disparities in COVID-19 emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations. In *one* of the reports, CDC says that data from 13 states, including Illinois, indicated that compared with White persons, Hispanic and American Indian or Alaska Native persons experienced 1.7 times the rate, and Black persons experienced 1.4 times the rate of ED care visits for COVID-19 during October-December 2020. In the *other report*, CDC says within each U.S. census region, the proportion of hospitalized patients with COVID-19 was highest for Hispanic or Latino patients, especially in the Midwest and West. Disparities were largest during May-July 2020 and became less pronounced as the pandemic spread across the country; however, disparities remained in Dec. 2020 in all regions.

CDC says data in the reports suggest ongoing racial/ethnic disparities in COVID-19 incidence, can provide insight into areas of racial/ethnic inequity in disease and outcomes and can be used to prioritize prevention resources, including COVID-19 vaccination, to reach disproportionately affected groups.

CDC Director Issues Statement on Racism and Health

Last Thursday, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH issued a *statement* declaring racism a serious public health threat. The statement reads in part:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the death of over 500,000 Americans. Tens of millions have been infected. And across this country people are suffering. Importantly, these painful experiences and the impact of COVID-19 are felt, most severely, in communities of color—communities that have experienced disproportionate case counts and deaths, and where the social impact of the pandemic has been most extreme. Yet, the disparities seen over the past year were not a result of COVID-19. Instead, the pandemic illuminated inequities that have existed for generations and revealed for all of America a known, but often unaddressed, epidemic impacting public health: racism. What we know is this: racism is a serious public health threat that directly affects the well-being of millions of Americans.”

Walensky also highlighted several new efforts CDC is leading to accelerate its work to address racism as a fundamental driver of racial and ethnic health inequities in the U.S. and unveiled a new website, *“Racism and Health”*. The website will serve as a hub for CDC’s efforts and a catalyst for greater education and dialogue around these critical issues.

Rush Receives Chicago Mayor’s Medal of Honor

On Tuesday, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot *announced* the *Mayor’s Medal of Honor*, a new award that honors individuals and organizations who have made extraordinary contributions to Chicago’s residents in 2020 and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the awardees is Rush University Medical Center. The mayor’s press release noted: “As COVID-19 first hit Chicago, Rush mobilized tremendous resources to provide testing and treatment for patients, including accepting many transfers of some of the most acutely ill patients in Chicago, and helping to lead efforts to support individuals in shelters, while maintaining a tremendous support system for their many outstanding employees.”

Resources

- [IDPH COVID-19 webpage](#) and [Coronavirus.illinois.gov](#)
- [CDC Homepage for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Chicago Department of Public Health COVID-19 webpage](#)
- [IHA webpage on 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.