April 15, 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 15, 2020

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

Situational Awareness
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced 1,346 new COVID-19 cases and 80 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 24,593 in 89 counties, with a total of 948 deaths.

COVID-19 Impact on State Budget
At today’s press briefing, Governor J.B. Pritzker provided an overview of Illinois’ projected budget shortfall given the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimates on the state’s general revenue funds now project shortfalls of $2.7 billion in fiscal year 2020 and $4.6 billion in fiscal year 2021. When including short-term borrowing as a bridge through the crisis, the total shortfall for FY2021 is estimated to be $6.2 billion and would grow to $7.4 billion if the proposed graduated income tax does not pass this November.

The Governor also said he has not made a determination on extending the state’s stay-at-home order, pointing out that Illinois has not yet seen a decline in COVID-19 cases. He said the state needs to ramp up testing and contact tracing to be able to take the next steps. (See IHA’s charts on Daily Numbers of New Cases in Illinois; 3-Day Rolling Average of New Cases; and Daily Number of Deceased.)

New Chicago Data Released
Today, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Public Health released new data indicating that social distancing and the state’s stay-at-home order may be working to flatten the
COVID-19 curve in Chicago, slowing the rate of increase in cases. This includes new case-level analysis gathered over the past month signaling great improvement in the time it is taking for the number of cases to double. Just one month ago, cases in Chicago were doubling every 2-3 days; now they are doubling every 12 days. The Mayor said a steady decline in new cases still needs to occur before major social distancing interventions are no longer required. See the City’s press release.

COVID-19 DRG Coding and CARES Act Funding
Today, IHA provided updates related to: (1) 20% add-on payment to diagnosis-related groups (DRGs) for Medicare-enrolled COVID-19 patients; and (2) $100 billion in funds for providers under the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (PHSSEF). Specifically, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released guidance specifying a 20% increase to the weighting factor for DRGs for Medicare-enrolled individuals that are diagnosed with COVID-19 and discharged during the emergency period. Also, a Department of Health and Human Services CARES Provider Relief Hotline (866-569-3522) has been established for providers with questions about the first round of PHSSEF funding. More information on the Medicare add-on and PHSSEF funding can be found on the IHA website in our automatic and federal funding opportunities resource documents.

VA Makes Beds Available for Non-Veteran Patients
The U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced it is making 1,500 beds available during the COVID-19 pandemic for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These beds will be a combination of acute care and intensive care beds for non-Veteran patients available at various VA locations around the country. The VA has made 35 beds available for the community at three facilities in Illinois: the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital, the Marion VA Medical Center, and the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center.

Upcoming COVID-19 Calls and Webinar
A Centers for Disease Control (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. Ways to access the call and more details can be found here.

Another COCA call, on April 17 from 1-2 p.m., will focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare systems, including key successes and challenges. More details on how to access the call are available here.

Project ECHO is hosting a national grand rounds webinar on April 16 at 11 a.m. to discuss emergency management resources and information that can be utilized to improve effective hospital and emergency department function during the COVID-19 pandemic. Register here.

On Monday, April 20 Project ECHO will host a clinical rounds webinar with EMS providers from across the country to discuss challenges faced in the COVID-19 response and what can be done to enhance patient care and emergency operations. Register here.

CDC Data on Healthcare Workers with COVID-19
Nearly 9,300 healthcare professionals were among the over 315,500 COVID-19 cases in the U.S. between Feb. 12 and April 9, according to new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The data, in the CDC’s Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report, offer a clearer picture of how the virus is impacting healthcare professionals. Overall, only 3% of COVID-19 cases were among healthcare professionals during the nine-week period. But, according to the CDC, that percentage is likely an underestimate since reports on 9,370 cases included information about healthcare professional status. In states with more complete reporting, healthcare professionals accounted for 11% of known cases.
The report identified several ways to prevent transmission from patients to these essential workers, including:

- Screening healthcare professionals for fever or respiratory symptoms at the beginning of their shifts;
- Prioritizing healthcare professionals for testing;
- Discouraging healthcare professionals from working while they are ill, with flexible and non-punitive medical leave policies;
- Continuing the use of recommended personal protective equipment (PPE); and
- Training healthcare professionals on preventive measures such as PPE use and hand hygiene.

**CDC Reports on COVID-19 Geographic Differences**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* released last Friday highlights geographic differences in COVID-19, with cases in all 50 states. Cumulative incidence rates range from 20.6 in Minnesota to 915.3 in New York City per 100,000 residents as of April 7, according to the report. Illinois reported 47.0 cases per 100,000 people, with an increase in the incident rate to 106.3 per 100,000 people between March 31 and April 7. The report shows how epidemiologic and population-level factors—like age distribution and underlying conditions—are critical for understanding community risk and future decision making during this pandemic.

**HFS Expands CMHC/BHC Medicaid Billing During COVID-19 Emergency**

The Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) has issued a provider notice that temporarily expands Medicaid-billable case management activities for Community Mental Health Centers and Behavioral Health Clinics (CMHCs/BHCs). A maximum of 90 minutes per day per client may be billed under Case Management – Mental Health for numerous activities related to assisting clients during the pandemic. For questions, contact the HFS Bureau of Behavioral Health at 217-557-1000 or HFS.BBH@illinois.gov.

**IRS Extends Deadline for Form 990 Series**

Last month the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provided an extension of time for filing federal income tax forms until July 15, 2020. Today, the IRS extended this relief to additional returns, including the filing of the Form 990 series and related Schedules. Form 990 is the IRS’ primary tool for gathering information about tax-exempt organizations. Further information can be found on the IRS webpage related to taxpayer relief due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Resources**

- [IDPH webpage on COVID-19](https://www.idph.gov)
- [Illinois COVID-19 website for the public - coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov]
- [Chicago Department of Public Health COVID-19 webpage](https://www.chicago.gov/cpd_department_of_public_health/covid_19)
- [IHA webpage on COVID-19](https://www.iha.org)

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.