April 21, 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 21, 2020

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

Situational Awareness
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced 1,551 new COVID-19 cases and 119 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 33,059 in 96 counties, with a total of 1,468 deaths.

U.S. Senate Passes $484 Billion Package to Help Hospitals, Small Businesses
Late this afternoon, the U.S. Senate approved and sent to the House a bill that includes an additional $75 billion to assist hospitals and other providers with expenses and lost revenues related to COVID-19. The funding is part of a broader package totaling over $480 billion that also shores up funding for Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans and COVID-19 testing.

The new funding for hospitals and other providers will be directed to the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund and is in addition to the $100 billion previously approved in the CARES Act. The bill includes $310 billion for PPP loans, although it does not expand eligibility to public and affiliated hospitals as IHA advocated for. IHA will continue to work with state and national partners to urge the Administration to ensure all hospitals which meet the size requirements are eligible.

The bill also provides $25 billion to expand COVID-19 testing, of which $11 billion is directed to states, localities, territories and tribes to develop, purchase, administer, process and analyze COVID-19 tests, and scale up laboratory capacity and trace contacts.
IDPH Overview: Emergency Rules for Emergency Order No. 24 (for Hospital Flexibility/Capacity)

IDPH issued a fact sheet summarizing Governor Pritzker’s April 16 Executive Order (COVID-19 #24) which instructs IDPH to exercise discretion regarding enforcement of certain healthcare laws and IDPH’s corresponding emergency rules implementing the Governor’s Executive Order. IHA previously provided a detailed summary of the emergency rules.

State Issues COVID-19 Non-Discrimination Guidance

The Illinois departments of Public Health, Human Services, Aging, and Human Rights, and the Governor’s Office have jointly issued Guidance Relating to Non-Discrimination in Medical Treatment for Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) to ensure that fairness and equity are incorporated in the delivery of care for COVID-19. Key areas of focus include:

- Preventing disability discrimination with individualized assessments that do not assume “quality of life” related to a person’s underlying disability, reasonable accommodations like an interpreter or aide, and reviewing treatment protocols to ensure they safeguard against the biases of practitioners;
- Preventing racial disparities by receiving medical history inquiries and diagnostic testing to ensure treatment is efficacious (e.g., for chronic conditions that can lead to increased COVID-19 fatalities), encouraging outreach to marginalized communities for participation in COVID-19 initiatives, and using a range of communication methods to reach the broadest audience; and
- Providing access to healthcare for persons experiencing financial insecurity, undocumented persons, and individuals with limited English proficiency.

IDFPR Issues Variances for Medical, Nursing, PA Students/Graduates in Response to COVID-19 Crisis

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) has issued variances to allow medical residents and students, nursing students and physician assistant students or recent graduates to practice in Illinois. See the IDFPR guidance for Medical Residents and Students, Nursing Students, and Physician Assistant Students.

NIH Issues COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), in collaboration with a panel of U.S. physicians, statisticians, and other experts, issued treatment guidelines for COVID-19. These guidelines, intended for healthcare providers, are based on published and preliminary data and the clinical expertise of the panelists, many of whom are frontline clinicians caring for patients during the rapidly evolving pandemic. The NIH says these guidelines will be updated often as new data are published in peer-reviewed scientific literature and as other authoritative information emerges.

First At-Home Test for COVID-19 Approved

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the first diagnostic test with a home collection option for COVID-19. The FDA has re-issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the Laboratory Corporation of America (LabCorp) COVID-19 RT-PCR Test to permit testing of samples self-collected by patients at home using LabCorp’s Pixel by LabCorp COVID-19 Test home collection kit. LabCorp intends to make the kit available to consumers in most states, with a doctor’s order, in the coming weeks.

FDA Issues Face Mask Emergency Use Authorization

The FDA issued a face mask emergency use authorization in response to concerns relating to insufficient supply and availability of face masks for use by members of the general public, including healthcare personnel in healthcare settings, as personal protective equipment (PPE), to cover their noses and mouths, in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the pandemic.
Chicago Launches Mask Campaign
Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) today announced that the city is launching the “Chicago Together! Make a Mask, Give a Mask, Wear a Mask” cloth mask drive on Saturday, April 25. Residents can make and donate homemade cloth masks that will be provided to homeless shelters, community health clinics, and other organizations to prevent outbreaks among the city’s most high-risk residents, which data has shown to be vulnerable residents on Chicago’s South and West Side communities.

Medicaid Telehealth Billing Clarification for Behavioral Health Providers
The Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services has posted a new Provider Notice for Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs), Behavioral Health Clinics (BHCs), and Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) Providers. The notice clarifies that CMHCs and BHCs are not required to use the GT modifier and Place of Service Code 02 as the distant site provider for services provided by phone, as referenced in a March 30 Informational Notice. However, to better monitor the use of telehealth services, providers will be required to start using this coding effective 60 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency ends. SUPR providers will also be required to start using the GT modifier and Place of Service Code 02 coding on claims effective 60 days after the public health emergency ends.

Additional CMS COVID-19 Stakeholder Engagement Calls Thursday and Friday
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will hold the following stakeholder engagement calls this Thursday and Friday (interested individuals are encouraged to listen to these calls via webcast, as telephone lines are limited):

- Thurs., April 23: CMS Office Hours from 4-5 p.m. CT. Call-in number: 833-614-0820; Access Code: 5899488. Audio webcast available here.

Recordings and transcripts for all calls are posted on the CMS podcast page.

Webinar on Addressing Mental Health Distress During Disasters
An Emergency Partners Information Connection (EPIC) webinar on Psychological First Aid (PFA): Addressing Mental Health Distress During Disasters will take place Wednesday, April 22 at noon. This webinar will provide a brief overview of PFA and connect viewers with both online and in-person training resources. More information including registration can be found here. A listing of upcoming webinars and materials from previous calls are available here.

Resources
- IHA webpage on COVID-19
- Illinois COVID-19 website for the public - 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