July 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

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SUBJECT: IHA COVID-19 Update – July 15, 2020

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

Situation Awareness
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today 1,187 new COVID-19 cases and eight deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 156,693 in 102 counties, with a total of 7,226 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 38,161 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 3.1%. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity rate from July 8 to July 14 is 3.1%. Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours increased from 1,416 patients to 1,454 patients. Of that figure, 324 patients were in the ICU, with 130 patients on ventilators.

Governor Announces New COVID-19 Mitigation Plan
Governor J.B. Pritzker today announced a new mitigation plan to prevent a renewed outbreak of COVID-19 – setting threshold metrics for taking action and revising the state’s regional framework. Metrics that will be used to determine when the spread of the virus in a region requires additional mitigations are:

- Sustained increase in 7-day rolling average (7 out of 10 days) in the positivity rate and one of the following severity indicators:
  --Sustained 7-day increase in hospital admissions for a COVID-19 like illness
  --Reduction in hospital capacity threatening surge capabilities (ICU capacity or medical/surgical beds < 20%)
- OR three consecutive days averaging ≥ 8% positivity rate

According to the Governor’s press release, the updated guidance from IDPH establishes three tiers of mitigations that can be implemented should a region meet the resurgence metrics. The plan includes provisions on hospital elective surgeries:
• Tier 1: Reduce elective surgeries and procedures; limit visitation at hospitals; implement twice daily bed reporting
  Tier 2: Suspend elective surgeries and procedures; implement surge capacity; assess need to open Alternate Care Facility
• Tier 3: Open Alternate Care Facility

Mitigations will be applied on a regional basis based on the traditional eleven IDPH Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Regions, with the new regions following county lines to account for counties that are in more than one region of the EMS system, with a few exceptions. The city of Chicago and suburban Cook County are in their own separate regions; Grundy and Kendall counties are in a region separate from the collar counties; and the other collar counties are in three separate regions (two counties each). A brief overview of the state’s “COVID-19 Mitigation Plan” is available on the state’s Coronavirus website.

**Chicago Mayor Warns of Potential Rollbacks**
Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot warned today that the city is “on the precipice” of rolling back parts of its reopening if COVID-19 cases continue to increase. Lightfoot and Chicago Public Health Commissioner Allison Arwady noted that the city’s daily average number of new cases is now 192. If that number goes over 200, Lightfoot said the city will consider taking action to “address particular areas where we are seeing the new cases coming from.” 30% of the new COVID-19 cases were among people ages 18 to 29.

**IDPH Memo to Hospitals on COVID-19 Reporting to HHS**
IDPH today sent hospitals a memo on major changes to the process hospitals use to report COVID-19 related data to the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) using the TeleTracking portal. As of today, hospitals should no longer report their COVID-19 information to the National Healthcare Safety Network COVID-19 portal. **Illinois hospitals are still required to report all information in EmResource**, including hospital bed availability and the COVID-19 Query. HHS will no longer send one-time requests for data to aid in the distribution of remdesivir or any other treatments or supplies. TeleTracking daily reporting is the only mechanism used for the distribution calculations. IDPH says while it is critical to report each of the data variables daily, the federal government is asking hospitals to report the following fields in TeleTracking - by **today** – to be used for determining future remdesivir distributions:

- Previous day’s new adult admissions for confirmed COVID-19
- Previous day’s new adult admissions for suspected COVID-19
- Total adults hospitalized for COVID-19 – suspected and confirmed
- Total hospitalized for COVID-19 – confirmed only
- Total adults in ICU with COVID-19 – suspected and confirmed
- Total adults in ICU with COVID-19 – confirmed
- Remdesivir doses (being added soon)

IDPH also indicates that while the above data elements will be used for the distribution of remdesivir, other fields will be used for the distribution of other items such as convalescent plasma and/or PPE. As a result, the federal government asks hospitals to report all of the data elements included in the Guidance for Hospital Reporting on a daily basis beginning no later than Wednesday, July 22.

**Healthcare, Business Groups Urge Use of Face Masks**
A diverse coalition of healthcare and business groups – including IHA, Illinois State Medical Society, Illinois Manufacturers’ Association and Illinois Retail Merchants Association – is urging Illinoisans to wear face masks to save lives and protect the state’s economy. In a press release the groups point out that COVID-19 cases and hospitalization rates have increased since the state moved to Phase 4 and that public health studies demonstrate masks slow the spread of the virus by as much as 85%.

**Urge Congress to Include Hospital Priorities in Next COVID-19 Legislation**
Congress is working on the next COVID-19 relief legislation. Members are urged to contact their U.S. Senators and Representatives (see IHA’s alert; send emails here) and ask them to support important policies in the legislation, including:
COVID-19 Response Fund Final Round Funding Deadline July 24
The Illinois COVID-19 Response Fund (ICRF) will be disbursing a final round of funding to nonprofit organizations serving individuals, families, and communities outside Cook/Collar Counties facing the greatest burden from the pandemic. Given that COVID-19 continues to disproportionately impact Black and Latinx communities, ICRF seeks applicants focused on serving Black/Latinx communities and that are led by or are partners with organizations headed by Black/Latinx leaders. Any organization or partnership that is a 501c3 public charity and meets the eligibility requirements may apply [click here]. See the FAQs. Questions can be emailed to icrf@cct.org. The application deadline is 12 noon on July 24.

IRS Moves CHNA Requirements Deadline to Dec. 31
Because of COVID-19, the Internal Revenue Service is providing additional relief to tax-exempt hospital organizations that must meet the Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) requirements. Notice 2020-56 extends the deadline for conducting a CHNA and adopting an implementation strategy to meet the community health needs identified through the CHNA to Dec. 31, 2020.

Chicago COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Report
Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot last week released a 104-page advisory report (see press release) compiled by the city’s COVID-19 Recovery Task Force, a group of more than 200 industry experts, regional government leaders, community-based partners, and policymakers. The Task Force developed a set of 17 recommendations, to go with four existing initiatives, to advance a targeted set of outcomes:
- Address new and old traumas
- Expand economic opportunity, quality employment, and financial security
- Build on our region’s strengths
- Capture opportunities created by COVID-19
- Reignite activity throughout Chicago by sharing our story
- Accelerate investments to eliminate inequities – including INVEST South/West

The report (pp. 50-51) calls for strengthening the city’s healthcare and life sciences ecosystem by:
- Expanding access to career opportunities and diversifying the workforce;
- Connecting and leveraging assets effectively;
- Making targeted investments to support research and development;
- Investing in neighborhoods; and
- Conducting targeted outreach to attract companies.

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