June 11, 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, Senior Director, Quality, Safety and Health Policy

SUBJECT: IHA COVID-19 Update – June 11, 2021

Our Final Regularly Scheduled Update
As Illinois moves today to Phase 5/full reopening, this is the final regularly scheduled IHA COVID-19 Update that we will be distributing. After today, IHA will continue to provide updates and information on important COVID-19 developments via memos and IHA’s Daily Briefing (to subscribe, email DailyBriefing@team-iha.org). Previous updates and other documents are posted on the IHA website at https://www.team-iha.org/quality-and-safety/emergency-preparedness/covid-19.

While we are keenly aware that the pandemic is not over and that the hospital community must continue to be vigilant and prepared, we are optimistic that all signs point toward a full opening of society. Over these past 15 months, it has been a privilege for IHA to closely work with and for all our members across the state as you and your extraordinarily dedicated front-line staffs have worked heroically day in and day out to respond to a once-in-a-century pandemic, saving lives and fighting the deadly virus.

The IHA response has truly been, and continues to be, a team effort that has touched every part of your Association and has required extraordinary effort from the entire IHA staff. We appreciate your support and patience as the team scrambled to stay abreast of the latest developments and to come up to speed on new issues in what has been uncharted territory for all of us.

Thank you for your continued partnership as we move forward.

Situational Awareness – Virus vs. Vaccine
The vaccine is winning. Newly reported COVID-19 cases continue to fall. The case positivity rate sits at 1.0%, the lowest level since the beginning of the pandemic. There are still just over 700 patients with COVID-19 being cared for in your hospitals, the lowest level since March of last year.

A total of 11.8 million vaccine doses have been administered in Illinois. We’ve reached 5.7 million fully vaccinated individuals, or 45% of the entire Illinois population. 82% of Illinoisans aged 65 and up have
received at least one dose of vaccine, while 63% of those aged 18 and up have received at least one dose. Progress has slowed, but Illinois healthcare providers are still administering almost 50,000 shots per day. There is still work to do on vaccinating the public, but the work done has been effective.

State Fully Reopens Today Under Phase 5 Guidelines
As the state prepared to fully reopen today, Governor J.B. Pritzker last week released guidelines for Phase 5 of the Restore Illinois plan. In Phase 5, all sectors of the economy can resume at regular capacity, and fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. The state is also lifting the outdoor mask requirement in schools. The state continues to recommend masking for unvaccinated persons, and requires it for all people while traveling on public transportation, in congregate settings, in healthcare settings, as well as in schools, day care, and educational institutions under IDPH and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance. Businesses and local municipalities can put in place additional mitigations.

HHS Revises Reporting Requirements and Fund Use Deadlines for PRF Recipients
Early this afternoon, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that it has released revised reporting requirements and deadlines to use funds for recipients of Provider Relief Fund (PRF) payments. This announcement includes expanding the amount of time providers will have to report information, aims to reduce burdens on smaller providers, and extends key deadlines for expending PRF payments for recipients who received payments after June 30, 2020. The revised reporting requirements will be applicable to providers who received one or more payments exceeding, in the aggregate, $10,000 during a single Payment Received Period from the PRF General Distributions, Targeted Distributions, and/or Skilled Nursing Facility and Nursing Home Infection Control Distributions.

The updated deadlines to use the funds are:
- June 30, 2021 for payments received from April 10 – June 30, 2020;
- December 31, 2021 for payments received from July 1 – December 31, 2020;
- June 30, 2022 for payments received from January 1 – June 30, 2021; and
- December 31, 2022 for payments received from June 30 – December 31, 2021.

The key reporting updates include:
- The period of availability of funds is based on the date the payment is received (rather than requiring all payments be used by June 30, 2021, regardless of when they were received).
- Recipients are required to report for each Payment Received Period in which they received one or more payments exceeding, in the aggregate, $10,000 (rather than $10,000 cumulatively across all PRF payments).
- Recipients will have a 90-day period to complete reporting (rather than a 30-day reporting period).
- The reporting requirements are now applicable to recipients of the Skilled Nursing Facility and Nursing Home Infection Control Distribution in addition to General and other Targeted Distributions.
- The PRF Reporting Portal will open for providers to start submitting information on July 1, 2021.

The revised reporting requirements supplanting the January 15 requirements can be found here.

State Phasing Out Vaccine Locator/POD Survey
The state is phasing out its COVID-19 vaccine hospital POD survey and vaccine locator. The last survey request to hospitals was made on Thursday, June 10. After that time, the state will direct the public to Vaccines.gov to find locations offering vaccine. Hospitals are strongly encouraged to enter their open
POD information into VaccineFinder so it remains viewable to the public through the Vaccines.gov platform of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**HHS Reminder: COVID-19 Vaccines & Tests Must be Free**

On Wednesday, U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra sent a letter to insurers and providers following reports of ongoing concerns about Americans facing costs associated with COVID-19 vaccinations or testing. “In light of recent reports of consumer cost concerns, I am reminding health care providers of their signed agreements to cover the administration of COVID-19 vaccines free-of-charge to patients, and group health plans and health insurers of their legal requirement to provide coverage of COVID-19 vaccinations and diagnostic testing without patients shouldering any cost,” said Becerra. “COVID-19 vaccines and their administration are free for any individual living in the United States, regardless of their insurance or immigration status.” Becerra also says that this past February, HHS with the Department of Labor and the Department of the Treasury issued updated guidance on the requirement that group health plans and health insurers cover COVID-19 diagnostic testing without cost-sharing.

**Moderna, J & J Vaccines Update**

Moderna announced Thursday that it has requested an emergency use authorization (EUA) for its COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents (ages 12-17 years) with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Also on Thursday, the FDA extended the shelf life from three months to four-and-a-half months of hundreds of thousands of Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine doses that would have expired within the next month and required them to be discarded.

**New CDC Data on Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this week released new data indicating that current COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective. In a new Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report issued Tuesday, the CDC said it calculated the rates of COVID-19 cases, emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and deaths by age group during Nov. 29–Dec. 12, 2020 (pre-vaccine) and April 18–May 1, 2021. The rate ratios comparing the oldest age groups (70 and older for hospital admissions; 65 and older for other measures) with adults aged 18–49 years were 40%, 59%, 65%, and 66% lower, respectively, in the latter period. These differences in declines are likely due, in part, to higher COVID-19 vaccination coverage among older adults, highlighting the potential benefits of rapidly increasing population-level vaccination coverage.

On Monday, the CDC released additional results of a study showing that the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of infection by 91% for fully vaccinated people and 81% for partially vaccinated people. The new findings come from four weeks of additional data collected in CDC’s HEROES-RECOVER study of healthcare workers, first responders, frontline workers, and other essential workers.

**Feds Ramp up Vaccination Efforts**

On Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the launch of a first-of-its-kind national hotline to connect people with disabilities to information and services to improve access to COVID-19 vaccines. The Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL) (acl.gov/DIAL; 888-677-1199) is now available to help people with disabilities find vaccination locations in their communities, assist callers with making vaccination appointments, and connect callers to local services – such as accessible transportation – to overcome barriers to vaccination.

On Wednesday, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced an additional payment amount for administering in-home COVID-19 vaccinations to Medicare beneficiaries who have difficulty...
leaving their homes or are otherwise hard-to-reach. Medicare is incentivizing providers and will pay an additional $35 per dose for COVID-19 vaccine administration in a beneficiary's home, increasing the total payment amount for at-home vaccination from approximately $40 to approximately $75 per vaccine dose. For a two-dose vaccine, this results in a total payment of approximately $150 for the administration of both doses, or approximately $70 more than the current rate.

OSHA Issues Rule on COVID-19 Healthcare Workplace Safety
On Thursday, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a final rule requiring healthcare employers to protect workers against on-the-job COVID-19 infection. The COVID-19 emergency temporary standard (ETS) applies only to the healthcare sector.

Key requirements of the ETS concern: Developing and implementing a COVID-19 plan; patient screening and management; standard and transmission-based precautions; personal protective equipment; aerosol-generating procedures on a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19; physical distancing; physical barriers; cleaning and disinfection; ventilation; health screening and medical management; vaccination; training; anti-retaliation; record keeping; and reporting work-related COVID-19 fatalities and in-patient hospitalizations to OSHA. The ETS exempts fully vaccinated workers from masking, distancing and barrier requirements when in well-defined areas where there is no reasonable expectation that any person will be present with suspected or confirmed coronavirus.

The ETS is effective immediately upon publication in the Federal Register. Employers must comply with most provisions within 14 days, and with provisions involving physical barriers, ventilation, and training within 30 days. For more information, go to OSHA’s COVID-19 Healthcare ETS webpage, which includes several documents about the rule and implementation. Also see OSHA’s press release.

Monoclonal Antibody Therapeutics Update
On Monday, IDPH issued a notice concerning the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) significant updates on June 3 to the Emergency Use Authorization for REGEN-COV (casirivimab and imdevimab) for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in certain adults and pediatric patients. These latest FDA updates include modifications in the authorized dosage (i.e., from 1200mg of casirivimab and 1200mg of imdevimab to 600mg of casirivimab and 600mg of imdevimab), the addition of subcutaneous route of administration as an alternative route when intravenous infusion is not feasible and would lead to delay in treatment, and the addition of a new REGEN-COV co-formulated product in a single vial. The previous dosing of 1200mg of casirivimab and 1200mg of imdevimab is no longer authorized.

For more information, see the FDA’s updated REGEN-COV fact sheet, prescribing information, and Frequently Asked Questions. The IDPH contact for monoclonal antibody therapy is ashley.thoele@illinois.gov; for therapeutic questions, contact COVID19Therapeutics@hhs.gov.

Adolescent COVID-19 Hospitalizations Up in March/April
COVID-19 hospitalizations for adolescents (ages 12-17 years) went up in March and April, according to a new study published last Friday in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). CDC says COVID-19 adolescent hospitalization rates from COVID-NET peaked at 2.1 per 100,000 in early January 2021, declined to 0.6 in mid-March, and rose to 1.3 in April. Among hospitalized adolescents, nearly one third required intensive care unit admission, and 5% required invasive mechanical ventilation. No associated deaths occurred.

IHA’s Health Equity Action Day on June 18 – Still Time to Register
The COVID-19 pandemic again starkly exposed a grim reality that people of color and communities of color suffer from unequal access to healthcare and disparate health outcomes. As part of IHA’s and the hospital community’s commitment and efforts to reduce health disparities and achieve health equity,
we are holding our inaugural Health Equity Action Day on Friday, June 18. For more information, click here. To register staff from your organization for this important event, click here.

Looking Back
Since early 2020, IHA has sent more than 200 COVID-19-related communications to members, including updates, memos, conference call notices and survey requests. Looking back at the past 15 months, here are some of the top headlines from our updates that marked this time:

- Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov) Update (our first update) (January 27, 2020)
- IHA Readiness Survey (Action Requested) (March 2, 2020)
- IHA Advocacy for Members with State and Federal Officials (March 18, 2020)
- IDPH – Enhanced Hospital Data Reporting is Critical (March 23, 2020)
- Governor’s Urgent Request on EMResource and SIREN (March 26, 2020)
- McCormick Place Alternate Care Facility Opens (April 3, 2020)
- IDPH Issues Guidance on Transfers from Hospitals to LTC Facilities (April 7, 2020)
- Governor Issues Executive Order to Provide Hospitals More Flexibility (April 16, 2020)
- Elective Surgeries to Be Conditionally Allowed Starting May 1 (April 23, 2020)
- President Signs Bill with $75 Billion for Hospitals, Providers (April 24, 2020)
- IHA, Others File Amicus Brief Supporting Governor’s Executive Order (April 29, 2020)
- Governor Releases “Restore Illinois” Plan to Reopen the State (May 5, 2020)
- Revised Projected Peak Surge in Illinois: Mid-June (May 11, 2020)
- IHA Urges State Legislative Leaders to Enact COVID-19 Help for Hospitals (May 12, 2020)
- Governor Issues Guidelines for Businesses, Workplaces to Reopen (Phase 3) (May 26, 2020)
- IHA Issues Statement on Addressing Health Disparities (June 15, 2020)
- IDPH Update: Inpatient Elective Surgeries, Procedures (suspending 20% capacity criteria) (June 19, 2020)
- State, Chicago Moving to Phase 4 Reopening on Friday (June 22, 2020)
- Chicago Issues Travel Quarantine Order (July 6, 2020)
- HHS Announces Major Changes to COVID-19 Reporting Process (July 13, 2020)
- Governor Announces New COVID-19 Mitigation Plan (July 15, 2020)
- IHA Board Establishes Committee on Health Disparities (July 20, 2020)
- Governor Issues New Disaster Proclamation, Executive Orders, Extends Waivers (July 27, 2020)
- Governor Pushes for Mask Compliance (August 10, 2020)
- State Updates, Expands COVID-19 County Warning List (August 24, 2020)
- White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Meets with State, Local Health & Hospital Officials (September 2, 2020)
- HHS/DOD Release COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Strategy (September 16, 2020)
- Governor Announces CARES Act Distribution (September 28, 2020)
- CMS Issues Guidance on Hospital COVID-19 Reporting Requirements, Enforcement (October 7, 2020)
- Governor Warns of COVID-19 Surge (October 19, 2020)
- Updated COVID-19 Warning List – 51 Counties (October 26, 2020)
- Tighter COVID-19 Restrictions on Three More Regions (November 9, 2020)
- IDPH Expanding Access to BinaxNow Rapid Tests to All Illinois Hospitals (November 11, 2020)
- Urgent Survey Request on Healthcare Staffing (November 18, 2020)
- Update on State’s COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Plan (November 23, 2020)
- IDPH Briefing on COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Plan Friday (December 9, 2020)
- COVID-19 Vaccine Arrives in Illinois (December 14, 2020)
- State Establishes COVID-19 Surge Staffing Pool (January 4, 2021)
Governor Provides Guidance Regarding Next Phase of State’s Vaccine Distribution Plan (January 6, 2021)
State Expanding Phase 1B Vaccination Eligibility (February 10, 2021)
IDPH Hospital Vaccine POD Questionnaire (February 18, 2021)
J & J Shipping COVID-19 Vaccine This Week (March 1, 2021)
U.S. Senate Adds $8.5 Billion to COVID Bill for Rural Providers (March 4, 2021)
State Enlists Critical Access Hospitals in Vaccination Efforts (March 11, 2021)
CMS Increases Medicare Payment for COVID-19 Vaccine (March 17, 2021)
State Steps Up Vaccinations in Rural Areas (April 7, 2021)
Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine on Pause (April 14, 2021)
IDPH Offering More COVID-19 Vaccine Allocations to Hospitals (April 28, 2021)
IDPH Issues Revised Guidance for Elective Surgeries/Procedures (May 5, 2021)
Pfizer Vaccine EUA Expanded to 12-15 Year Olds (May 12, 2021)
EEOC: Employers Can Mandate COVID-19 Vaccinations (June 2, 2021)
Our Final Regularly Scheduled Update (June 11, 2021)

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.