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,
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Government Relations Personnel, In-House Counsel, Public Relations Directors

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SUBJECT: IHA COVID-19 Update – June 2, 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 478 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases and nine deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 1,383,065 with a total of 22,842 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 35,697 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 1.34%. The preliminary 7-day statewide positivity rate for cases as a percent of total tests from May 26 – June 1 is 1.5%, and the 7-day test positivity rate is 1.8% - the lowest level for these metrics since the outset of the pandemic.

Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours decreased from 1,031 patients to 1,013 patients. Of that figure, 278 were in the ICU, with 150 patients on ventilators.

The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 41,234 doses. Yesterday, 29,322 doses were reported administered in Illinois. More than 67% of Illinois adults have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and nearly 51% of Illinois adults are fully vaccinated, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Governor Issues New COVID-19 Disaster Proclamation, Executive Order
On Friday (May 28), Governor J.B. Pritzker issued a new COVID-19 Disaster Proclamation and Executive Order (EO) No. 11 (COVID-19 #80), extending prior executive orders for 30 days to June 26, but also rolling back and eliminating some waivers. With respect to the healthcare related EOs, as vaccinations continue to increase and the state begins to emerge from the pandemic, the previous waivers that provided flexibilities are being rolled back, in some cases entirely. Key healthcare-related areas covered by the EO’s include: telehealth; Healthcare worker background checks; actions by the Illinois Dept. of Financial and Professional Regulation for licensed professionals engaged in disaster response; hospital capacity flexibilities/waivers; and Illinois Dept. of Public Health regulatory activities. See a detailed IHA summary of the key changes in the new Executive Order.

Integrating COVID-19 Vaccination into Hospital ED and Inpatient Discharge Workflows
In addition to expanding COVID-19 vaccine administration into hospital primary care practices (see page 2 of IHA’s May 19 COVID-19 Update and webinar notice below), IDPH is interested in expanding vaccine
administration into emergency departments and inpatient hospital discharge as part of the workflow. In a letter to hospital CEOs, CMOs, CNOs, and COOs, IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike notes that hospitals and hospital systems are uniquely positioned to educate patients and offer vaccine: “Incorporating vaccine into the patient care workflow in the hospital is a best practice for influenza vaccine, and we are calling on you to mobilize your staff to offer COVID-19 vaccine in the same way. This might be facilitated by embedding reminders to offer vaccine into decision support tools in the nursing workflow, signs/provider buttons to “Ask me about the COVID-19 vaccine,” and other creative ideas.

“IDPH recommends you make every effort to vaccinate eligible persons and if you need to puncture a multi-dose vial to administer to one or more patients but not enough to use the entire vial, please do so anyway. While good planning will minimize vaccine wastage, IDPH is expecting increases in wastage as the vaccination effort evolves. Your hospital will not be penalized for reporting an increase in the number of unused/wasted doses.”

Hospitals that are enrolled in I-CARE and have executed a COVID-19 vaccine provider agreement are now able to order vaccine directly in ICARE. Address any questions related to I-CARE enrollment, COVID-19 vaccine provider agreements or vaccine ordering to: dph.immunizations@illinois.gov. The state is also promoting Vaccines.gov as the primary vaccine provider search engine and asks that hospitals make sure to report COVID-19 vaccine clinics that are open to the public in Vaccines.gov and advertise locally.

COVID-19 Vaccine Administration in the Primary Care Office
The Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, with IDPH, will hold a webinar on “COVID-19 Vaccine Administration in the Primary Care Office” on Friday, June 4 from 12 noon to 1 p.m. CDT. To register, click here. Presenters will discuss:
- Enrolling in I-CARE and Executing a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Agreement
- Placing Direct Orders for Vaccine in I-CARE
- Hub and Spoke Model for Vaccine Ordering for Smaller Practices
- Vaccine Storage Requirements and Implications for Ordering and Administration
- Minimizing Waste and Taking Every Opportunity to Vaccinate
- Improving Vaccine Uptake Among Your Patients
- Integrating COVID-19 into Our Practice.

EEOC: Employers Can Mandate COVID-19 Vaccinations
Employers can mandate that employees must be vaccinated for COVID-19, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) said on Friday. In an updated guidance (see the new section K), the EEOC says: “The federal EEO laws do not prevent an employer from requiring all employees physically entering the workplace to be vaccinated for COVID-19, subject to the reasonable accommodation provisions of Title VII and the ADA and other EEO considerations. These principles apply if an employee gets the vaccine in the community or from the employer.” In addition, the EEOC says: “Employers may provide employees and their family members with information to educate them about COVID-19 vaccines, raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination, and address common questions and concerns. Under certain circumstances employers may offer incentives to employees who receive COVID-19 vaccines, as discussed in K.16 – K.21.”

CMS Informational Bulletin on COVID-19 Vaccines for Adolescents
Last Friday, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued a new bulletin on COVID-19 vaccines for adolescents 12 and older, with information on access, eligibility, and patient outreach and education. CMS included a fact sheet to help states identify Medicaid, CHIP and Basic Health Program requirements for vaccine administration coverage, cost-sharing and reimbursement.

COVID Hospital Data Reporting Update
Last Thursday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released an update of the COVID-19 Guidance for Hospital Reporting and FAQs with an implementation date of June 10. In the new version
of the guidance, the influenza fields (fields 33-38) and Therapeutics B fields for bamlanivimab alone (fields 39 c-d) will be optional. More substantive changes incorporating feedback are expected in the next update, anticipated in approximately one month.

Additional Monoclonal Antibody Treatment for COVID-19
Last week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that it has issued an emergency use authorization for the investigational monoclonal antibody therapy sotrovimab for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients (12 years of age and older weighing at least 40 kilograms [about 88 pounds]) with positive results of direct SARS-CoV-2 viral testing and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death. The FDA says the safety and effectiveness of this investigational therapy continues to be evaluated. Sotrovimab is not authorized for patients who are hospitalized due to COVID-19 or require oxygen therapy due to COVID-19.

Rural Health Vaccine Confidence Funding Opportunity
The Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) has announced a funding opportunity for the Rural Health Clinic Vaccine Confidence (RHCVC) Program. Eligible applicants include Medicare-certified rural health clinics (RHCs) and organizations that own and operate Medicare-certified RHCs. The program’s purpose is to support RHCs as they work to improve vaccine confidence, counter vaccine hesitancy, and help with access to the vaccination in rural communities experiencing low COVID-19 vaccination rates. Interested RHCs should review the Notice of Funding Opportunity and start the process to register to apply for a HRSA grant. Questions can be sent to RHCVaxConfidence@hrsa.gov. Applications will be accepted until June 23.

Moderna Seeks Full FDA Approval for COVID-19 Vaccine
On Tuesday, Moderna announced that it is applying to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for full approval of its COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine is currently available in the U.S. under an Emergency Use Authorization, which was granted on December 18, 2020. As of Tuesday, more than 124 million doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in the U.S.

CDC Resources on Myocarditis/Pericarditis Following COVID-19 Vaccination
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published Clinical Considerations for myocarditis and pericarditis following COVID-19 vaccination. Additionally, resources for the public have been added to CDC’s website that can be a resource for patients. Since April 2021, a very small number of cases of myocarditis and pericarditis have been reported in the U.S. after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna). The CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 and older, given the greater risk of COVID-19 illness and related, possibly severe complications.

IHA’s Health Equity Action Day on June 18 – Now Open for Registration
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;

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.