June 24, 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 – June 24, 2020

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

Situational Awareness
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today 715 new COVID-19 cases and 64 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 138,540 in 101 counties, with a total of 6,770 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 29,331 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 2.4%. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity rate from June 17 to June 23 is 3%. Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours decreased from 1,648 patients to 1,614 patients. Of that figure, 389 patients are in the ICU, with 219 patients on ventilators.

COVID-19 Disparities Among Medicare Beneficiaries
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has released data describing the impact of COVID-19 on the Medicare population as of May 16. Preliminary data indicate
that Black Medicare beneficiaries are nearly four times more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 than White Medicare beneficiaries, with a hospitalization rate of 465 per 100,000 for Blacks, compared to 123 per 100,000 for Whites. The hospitalization rate for Hispanic Medicare beneficiaries is 258 per 100,000, and the hospitalization rate for Asian Medicare beneficiaries is 187 per 100,000. More information and additional analysis can be found here, with answers to frequently asked questions here. See also a CMS blog post.

More Research Needed to Improve COVID Antibody Tests
Many of the nation’s leading scientists and clinicians say additional research is needed to determine if and to what extent a positive antibody test means a person may be protected from reinfection with SARS-CoV-2. More than 300 scientists and clinicians from the federal government, industry and academia gathered for an online workshop to discuss the role of serology testing in understanding and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in May. They have published a report of their conclusions and recommendations on COVID-19 serology studies online in Immunity.

Serology tests for COVID-19 are designed to detect antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. While such tests do not diagnose active infection, they can indicate prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 that may have been missed because a person did not experience significant symptoms or access testing while infected. Workshop attendees emphasized that until additional research data is available, serology tests should not be used as a stand-alone tool to make decisions about personal safety related to SARS-CoV-2 exposure. See more in a National Institutes of Health press release.

Next ILPQC COVID-19 OB/Neonatal Strategies Webinars
The Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative (ILPQC) has moved its OB/Neonatal COVID-19 Strategies webinars to every other week. The next ILPQC webinars will be held on Friday, June 26th and Friday, July 10 from 12 to 1:15 p.m. Register here. Also, see the ILPQC Covid-19 Webpage for regular updates with time-stamped national guidelines from ACOG, SMFM, AAP, CDC and other organizations, OB and neonatal relevant COVID-19 publications and example protocols/resources from obstetric and neonatal units.

IHA Leadership Webinar Series Kicks Off Thursday

The series continues on July 9 with “COVID-19: What’s Next and How to Plan," featuring Martin A. Makary, MD, of Johns Hopkins University. All webinars are one hour and include a question-and-answer session. Hospital and health system leaders are encouraged to register to learn valuable post-pandemic strategies. Register here.
State Issues Guidance for In-Person Education to Resume This Fall

As the state moves to Phase 4 of its “Restore Illinois” reopening plan, Governor J.B. Pritzker Tuesday announced guidelines that will allow K-12 schools, community colleges, and higher education institutions to resume in-person instruction for the upcoming academic year. To help schools meet the guidelines and prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency will provide public K-12 districts 2.5 million cloth face masks for students and staff.

The guidance released by the Illinois State Board of Education and IDPH allows schools to bring students back to school buildings in the fall while ensuring the health and safety of students and staff remains the top priority. Each school district will determine how to implement the guidance based on its unique student enrollment, school facilities, staffing, transportation, and technological capacity. The Illinois Board of Higher Education established guidelines for higher education institutions to safely reopen their classrooms based on input from IDPH and higher education leaders throughout Illinois. The Illinois Community College Board and its Return to Campus Committee, with the approval of IDPH, have also issued guidelines.

Chicago Launches COVID-19 Mobile Testing Pilot Program

Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Tuesday that Chicago is launching a COVID-19 mobile testing pilot program to reach residents in communities on the South and West sides that are experiencing a disproportionate impact from COVID-19. The mobile testing sites will operate at Austin Health Center and Kennedy King College. Also, the city will begin operating mobile testing on the Northwest and Southwest sides to serve first responders. Each mobile testing site will have the capacity to test up to 500 persons per day and have the flexibility to travel, allowing testing to be directed toward communities most impacted by the virus.

Resources

- IDPH 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