



March 1, 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
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SUBJECT: IHA COVID-19 Update – March 1, 2021

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

Situational Awareness

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today 1,143 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases and 20 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 1,187,839 with a total of 20,536 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 42,234 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 2.7%. The preliminary 7-day statewide positivity rate for *cases* as a percent of total tests from Feb. 22-28 is 2.4%, and the seven-day *test* positivity rate is 2.7%. Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours increased from 1,265 patients to 1,288 patients. Of that figure, 308 patients were in the ICU, with 148 patients on ventilators. Sunday's hospitalization and ICU numbers were the lowest since the state began reporting those metrics last April.

J & J Shipping COVID-19 Vaccine This Week

On Saturday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved an Emergency Use Authorization for the Johnson and Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, and on Sunday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) signed an advisory committee's recommendation that endorsed the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine and its use in people age 18 and older. This week, J & J is distributing 3.9 million doses of the vaccine, which is the entirety of the company's current inventory. In a press release, J & J said it will deliver more than 20 million doses in March and 100 million doses in first half of 2021.

The CDC will hold a Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity call on the J & J vaccine on Tuesday, March 2 at 1 p.m. CT. Click here for the webinar link and call-in details.

FDA OKs Alternative Temperature for Pfizer Vaccine

The FDA announced last week it is allowing undiluted frozen vials of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to be transported and stored at conventional temperatures commonly found in pharmaceutical freezers for up to two weeks. This reflects an alternative to the preferred storage in ultra-low temperatures. See an updated Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine.

Federal Vaccination Site Opening at United Center

A new federal COVID-19 vaccination site will open March 10 at the United Center in Chicago, with the capacity to administer 6,000 doses a day. Officials announced on Friday that eligible Illinoisans across

the state will be able to be vaccinated at the site, prioritizing access for seniors and equity for the hardest hit populations. The site will be by appointment only with seniors having first access. After seniors have their registration period, any remaining available slots will be open to eligible Illinoisans.

UI Saliva Test Receives EUA

The University of Illinois System announced today it has received emergency use authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for covidSHIELD, its saliva-based COVID-19 test that is being used on the U of I campuses for widespread testing with rapid results. Governor Pritzker said the state will use \$20 million in CARES Act funding to provide one million of the tests to Illinois' other public universities.

New Guidance on Coverage for COVID-19 Testing

In accordance with an Executive Order signed by President Biden, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Departments of Labor and Treasury issued new guidance on Friday removing barriers to COVID-19 diagnostic testing and vaccinations and strengthening requirements that plans and issuers cover diagnostic testing without cost sharing. See CMS' press release for more information.

U.S. House Advances COVID-19 Bill

On Saturday, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a modified version of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319), a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 package that focuses on vaccines, testing and public health, while providing assistance to individuals and families. See an IHA summary of key healthcare provisions. The Senate will consider the bill this week and is expected to further modify the legislation.

Updated PRF FAQs

Last week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) updated the Provider Relief Fund (PRF) FAQs. HHS commented on use of PRF dollars to pay for time spent by staff participating in task forces or meetings specific to the organization's COVID-19 response. See pages 16-17 of the FAQs.

Ad Council Launches National Campaign on Vaccinations

Last Thursday, the Ad Council announced a \$500 million campaign, "It's Up to You," to promote coronavirus vaccines and educate consumers. Ads will run on social media, TV, radio and websites, with a focus on Black and Hispanic communities.

Workers' Comp Extended for First Responders, Frontline Essential Workers

On Friday, Governor Pritzker signed HB4276 into law (PA101-0653), extending workers' compensation benefits until June 30 for first responders and frontline essential workers who were exposed to and contracted COVID-19 through their job.

IDPH COVID-19 Situational Update Webinar Wednesday

IDPH will hold a COVID-19 Situational Update Webinar on Wednesday at 11 a.m. Register here.

IDPH Reminder

IDPH is reminding all COVID-19 vaccine providers that requiring a social security number from a patient seeking a vaccination appointment is prohibited.

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.