March 20, 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
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 – March 20, 2020

Here are some of the top developments today concerning COVID-19:

**Governor Orders Illinoisans to Stay at Home Through April 7**
Today, in an effort to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced at a press briefing a “Stay-at-Home” Executive Order for all Illinoisans starting Sat., March 21 at 5 p.m. and continuing through Tues., April 7. All schools are ordered closed until that date, while Chicago parks and libraries are to close as well. The order closes “non-essential” businesses while keeping essential businesses such as grocery stores, banks, gas stations, daycare and other related businesses open. Individuals may leave their residences to work for or obtain through Healthcare and Public Health Operations, including hospitals and clinics.

The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) this afternoon announced 585 cases of COVID-19 in 25 counties (an increase of 163 cases), with 1 new death—a Cook County woman in her 70s—for a total of 5 deaths in Illinois.

**IHA Asks Congress: Send Direct Funds to Hospitals Now**
In a letter sent this morning to the Illinois Congressional delegation, IHA President & CEO A.J. Wilhelmi asks Congress to send immediate and direct funding to hospitals to support their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among numerous requests, the letter asks Congress to provide funds to address cash flow needs as hospitals rapidly expand to meet surge capacity, access critical supplies and equipment, work to maintain a healthy and continuous workforce, create additional bed capacity—including establishment of alternative sites for patients needing sub or post-acute care, and numerous other extraordinary actions to care for Illinois patients and communities.
**IHA Issues COVID-19 Commercial Coverage Guidance**

To assist members in navigating payer policies during the COVID-19 crisis, IHA has compiled a list of private payer telehealth coverage policies, prior authorization and member cost-sharing waivers, and billing requirements for COVID-19 testing services. Please note that this information is current as of March 19, and is subject to change in this rapidly evolving environment. The memo is available here. Current payer requirements regarding network status are identified here (Excel format).

**CDPH Issues Orders for Chicago Hospitals**

The Chicago Dept. of Public Health (CDPH) has issued on duties of hospitals and others along with guidance of personal protective equipment (PPE). Key orders for acute and long-term care hospitals include:

- Adopting and implementing administrative and PPE control policies to reduce potential transmission of COVID-19 and to conserve PPE;
- Postponing elective surgeries and medical procedures;
- Implement a strict visitor policy in hospitals and clinics with exceptions for circumstances where having no companion may have long-term negative health implications for the patients;
- Implementing a policy to limit entry into patient rooms of COVID-19 patients to essential healthcare workers only; and
- Implementing a policy to check employees for symptoms of COVID-19 at the start and end of each shift.

In addition, CDPH ordered all acute care hospitals in Chicago to submit online daily reports on defined COVID-related patient data, e.g., daily counts of COVID-19-related intensive care unit (ICU) admissions; COVID-19 patients receiving mechanical ventilation; and COVID-19-related deaths that occurred at the hospital during the preceding 24 hours.

**Latest Resources and Guidance**

- [IDPH webpage on COVID-19](#)
- [New Illinois Coronavirus Website for the Public](#)
- [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](mailto:tnuding@team-iha.org)