March 22, 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 22, 2020

To support hospitals and health systems in their ongoing efforts to care for patients potentially exposed to or diagnosed with COVID-19, IHA is continuing to provide updates on the latest developments and other important information about the novel coronavirus. Thanks to the many hospital leaders who were able to join us on our Saturday morning conference call to hear and discuss your concerns and issues. We commend all of you and your healthcare teams for your outstanding commitment and efforts, and we at IHA are doing everything we can to support you during this challenging time.

Situational Awareness
The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) this afternoon announced 296 new COVID-19 cases, including an infant, and 3 additional deaths in the state, bringing the total number of cases to 1,049 in 30 counties and deaths to nine. During his daily press briefing, Governor J.B. Pritzker issued another plea for retired healthcare workers to assist in responding to COVID-19, and also asked for volunteers to help (those interested in volunteering are asked to visit serve.illinois.gov).

State Emergency Application License Process for Hospitals to Set Up Childcare Centers
The Governor, his staff, his Office of Early Childhood Development, and the leadership at the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) have established an emergency licensing process for hospitals to set up their own childcare centers. Go to the OECD website and click on “An IDCFS application for providers to apply for an emergency license to provide care.” Completed applications should be submitted to IDCFS at Emergency.Daycare@illinois.gov.
In addition, IHA is working closely with the Governor and IDPH as they coordinate the state’s preparations for and response to the COVID-19 crisis. They are seeking information about the potential demand for and use of childcare services for healthcare workers. Please complete a brief survey (click here) by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, March 25.

**Chicago Initiative on Childcare for Healthcare Workers and First Responders**

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Sittercity, an online resource for in-home care, today announced a new initiative to help Chicago’s most essential workforce – healthcare workers, first responders and the teams who support them – continue to work on behalf of the City amid COVID-19. A new, dedicated website – sittercity.com/chicagoresponds – will make it easier for workers deemed an essential part of the infrastructure helping Chicago stay safe, to find reliable childcare that will allow them to continue their crucial work. The Chicago Mayor’s Office asks that all Chicago hospitals make their employees and contractual employees aware of this service.

**National Guard Deployment of Tents and Personnel at Hospitals**

In a separate IHA communication sent earlier today to select hospital leaders, leaders are being asked to respond to Anne Stilwell (astilwell@team-iha.org) on their interest in having the Illinois National Guard deploy tents and personnel on their facility grounds. IDPH is trying to quickly ascertain which hospitals are most in need of these resources.

**IHA Submits Federal 1135 Waiver on Behalf of Illinois Hospitals**

Shortly after the President’s national emergency declaration, CMS issued blanket waivers and HHS Secretary Azar issued blanket waivers and modifications, both under Section 1135, and more have been issued since then, including ones for EMTALA, HIPAA and telehealth, among others. These waivers are essentially “blanket” waivers which means that a hospitals does not need to do anything further to utilize these waivers – they are self-executing. Late Friday, IHA filed a statewide Section 1135 waiver on behalf of all Illinois hospitals with the Dept. of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and we are awaiting a response. If, however, a hospital desires a waiver that is not included in the existing blanket waivers or IHA’s requested waivers, it will need to file its own waiver request or submit it to IHA to be included in a future supplemental request.

In the meantime, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services has also filed a Section 1135 waiver for Illinois’ Medicaid program. Additionally, IHA is working on waivers of state law as well.

**New Notices from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services this afternoon issued two new notices:

- **Relief for Clinicians, Providers, Hospitals and Facilities Participating in Quality Reporting Programs in Response to COVID-19** - CMS is granting exceptions from reporting requirements and extensions for clinicians and providers participating in Medicare quality reporting programs with respect to upcoming measure reporting and data submission for those programs. CMS is making it optional to submit data from the 4th quarter of 2019 (Oct. through Dec.), as well as the first two quarters of 2020 (Jan. through March, and April through June); and CMS will not use data from Jan. 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020 to calculate performance in its quality reporting and value-based purchasing programs.

- **COVID-19 Checklists and Tools to Accelerate Relief for State Medicaid & CHIP Programs** – CMS has created four checklists that together will make up a comprehensive Medicaid COVID-19 federal authority checklist to make it easier for states to receive federal waivers and implement flexibilities in their program.

**Congress Negotiating COVID-19 Bill**
The U.S. Senate continues negotiations on a third legislative package to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The approximately $1.5 trillion CARES Act (the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) is expected to include several critical provisions for hospitals and health systems, as well as support for families, workers and businesses. IHA has urgently called on federal lawmakers to make funds immediately and directly available to hospitals to care for COVID-19 patients, protect and support healthcare workers, access critical supplies and equipment, and scale up to meet surge capacity. During a call earlier this week with Sen. Dick Durbin and numerous Illinois hospitals, IHA President & CEO A.J. Wilhelmi underscored the urgency of making funds directly available to hospitals to combat the virus. Earlier today, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) circulated the text of proposed legislation. Senate Democrats, as well as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, have signaled the legislation is insufficient. A procedural vote in the Senate late this afternoon failed to garner support from Democrats. Negotiations will continue tonight into Monday.

IHA’s Plea for Medical Supplies - UPDATE
Last Thursday, IHA issued a public plea to the leaders of associations for the construction industry, dentists, veterinarians, colleges and universities, and other groups that may be able to help by donating unused N95 masks and related personal protective equipment (PPE) to Illinois hospitals. In addition to businesses, community members across the state have responded to IHA’s plea, asking how they can help their local hospitals by donating masks, hand sanitizers or wipes, or even sewing masks at home. Since hospital needs for supplies and materials vary, we are directing interested donors to visit the website of their local hospitals to check on their specific needs.

Carle Foundation Hospital embraced their community support and created a website that includes specific instructions on how to make and package home-sewn masks. IHA will continue to encourage volunteers who contact us expressing interest in donating homemade masks to contact their local hospital.

IDPH released a bulletin (click here) over the weekend encouraging donations from Outpatient Surgical and Procedural Centers, Ambulatory Surgery Centers and Veterinarians, requesting surgical gloves, gowns, goggles, face shields, surgical masks, and N95 respirator masks. IHA will direct all interested donors of PPE to contact IDPH at PPE.donations@illinois.gov or to visit www2.illinois.gov/sites/serve/Disaster/Pages/COVID-19-PPE-Donations.aspx.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidance, “Extended Use and Limited Reuse of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators in Healthcare Settings” (https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html).

IDPH Guidance on Ethical Medical Decision-Making
Responding to an inquiry from IHA, IDPH has confirmed that it will be releasing guidance soon to assist medical decision-making with resource allocation. An extensive and experienced team has been convened that is tasked with creating guidelines and developing an objective scoring tool to be used for care prioritization. When complete, initial guidance will be released, with updates thereafter.

Reminder: IDPH Email Portal for Receiving Hospital Questions, Comments, Ideas
At the request of IHA, IDPH established an email portal: dph.hospitaladmin@illinois.gov. This designated email address is reserved to receive questions, comments, and ideas from the hospital community and IHA. A team of staff assigned from the IDPH Director’s Office is reviewing the emails, with a goal of responding within 24 hours.

SIREN
Hospitals and physicians are urged to sign up for SIREN, the *State of Illinois Rapid Electronic Notification System*, which IDPH uses to send COVID-19 alerts and guidance. To register for SIREN, go to [https://siren.illinois.gov/agreement.php](https://siren.illinois.gov/agreement.php) or send an email to [dph.siren@illinois.gov](mailto:dph.siren@illinois.gov)

**Latest Resources and Guidance**

- IDPH webpage on COVID-19
- Illinois COIVD-19 website for the public - [coronavirus.illinois.gov](http://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](mailto:tnuding@team-iha.org)