March 23, 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
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SUBJECT: IHA COVID-19 Update – March 23, 2020

Here is a brief recap of today’s top developments.

Situational Awareness
The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) this afternoon announced 236 new COVID-19 cases and three additional deaths in the state, bringing the total number of cases to 1,285 in 31 counties and deaths to nine.

IDPH – Enhanced Hospital Data Reporting is Critical
Today, IDPH expanded the list of questions to hospitals in EMResource, replacing all of the current discrete inquiries to hospitals. Key areas of focus in the daily survey now include: Numbers of COVID-19 patients and PUIs and those in ICU and on ventilators; hospital readiness; specimens and PPE; testing materials; and lab capacity. The Governor’s Office is requesting that all hospitals in all regions of the state begin submitting the additional data that will be critical to helping IDPH monitor many aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak statewide, helping to guide future response strategies.

State Steps Up Efforts to Obtain and Increase Medical Supplies
Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced today at his daily press briefing that the state has executed contracts to purchase 2.5 million N95 masks, 1 million disposable surgical masks, 11,000 gloves and 10,000 personal protection kits. In a press release, the Governor also outlined the state’s request for personal protective equipment (PPE) from the federal government and what the state has received to date. He also called for federal activation of the Defense Production Act to increase the production of essential medical supplies and their distribution to states in need.
The Governor also announced the state is partnering with two business groups on the production and purchase of PPE and ventilators. The Illinois Manufacturers Association (IMA) is connecting companies that shift their production to items such as N95 masks, sanitizer, test kits, and ventilators with buyers and help them in dealing with federal rules. IMA asks that manufacturers, which can provide or donate essential medical supplies, to take a brief survey, and IMA will be in touch with them. The Illinois Biotechnology Innovation Organization (iBIO) will connect producers and medical providers as well as launch a fund to raise money to purchase products that are not donated. iBIO is providing technical assistance to factories that want to switch their product mix and is also establishing a fund for those who want to donate money to help healthcare workers and first responders.

IDFPR Loosens Regulations to Add Needed Healthcare Workers
The Illinois Dept. of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) today announced several actions to increase the number of healthcare professionals to assist during the COVID-19 pandemic. IDFPR issued a proclamation to allow out-of-state physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and respiratory care therapists to provide care to Illinois residents affected by COVID-19. Additionally, IDFPR prepared a series of variances allowing Illinois physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and respiratory care therapists whose license status is inactive, non-renewed, or expired that also satisfy an additional set of specific criteria, to restore their licenses temporarily during this crisis. Out-of-state licensed physicians, nurses, physician assistants, and respiratory care therapists may practice in the State of Illinois in a limited set of circumstances as provided for by the IDFPR proclamation. Complete details, including applications, for reinstatement can be found in an IDFPR press release. To view the proclamation and variances issued, click here.

IDPH Guidance to Hospitals on Triage for COVID19 patients
IDPH has developed a screening protocol (click here) to assist healthcare facilities with screening noncritical patients for COVID-19. This protocol was developed as a screening tool for Emergency Departments but can be easily adapted for other point-of-entry operations.

Protocol to Decontaminate One-Use PPE
In light of the national shortage of one-use PPE, IHA is sharing a protocol (click here) developed by Nebraska Medicine to decontaminate these items so they can be safely used multiple times. The toolkit uses ultraviolet light towers to irradiate high numbers of masks. This strategy can allow hospitals to greatly extend the supply of these critical personal protection items during the intense demand created by the coronavirus pandemic.

NEW INFORMATION: Emergency Application License Process for Hospitals to Set Up Childcare Centers
The Governor, his staff, his Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD), 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. See new informational resources: Webinar Slides and Webinar Recording

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.

Survey Reminder: 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.

HFS Issues Long-Term Care Provider Notice During COVID-19 Pandemic
The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) has issued a Provider Notice to Long-Term Care (LTC) providers on temporary revisions to Medicaid processes for conducting required pre-admission screenings. The Pre-admission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) assessment, the Specialized SLP Mental Health assessment, and the Determination of Need (DON) assessment will incorporate the following:

- Screenings can be conducted telephonically instead of in-person;
- Post admission screenings will be allowed if conducted within 10 days of admission; and,
- State screening agents should coordinate with hospital discharge planners and LTC settings to schedule a time for the screenings and assure a staff person is available to assist the individual being screened.

HFS Extends March Hospital Assessment Due Date
HFS is extending the due date for the March Hospital assessment by one week to March 31. IHA is working with Medicaid MCOs to assist in finalizing all the March Directed and Pass-Through payments during the current week. IHA will update members as further developments occur.

CMS Approves Illinois’ 1135 Waiver Request
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today approved an additional 11 state Medicaid waiver requests under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, including Illinois’ request (click here) submitted by the Department of Healthcare and Family Services. The waivers provide relief on a number of fronts, such as prior authorization and provider enrollment requirements, suspending certain nursing home pre-admission reviews, and facilitating reimbursement to providers for care delivered in alternative settings due to facility evacuations.

CMS FAQs on Medicare Provider Enrollment Relief
CMS released frequently asked questions on Medicare provider enrollment relief during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, CMS added a number of flexibilities to Medicare provider enrollment, including the establishment of a toll-free hotline with each of the Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to allow physicians and non-physician practitioners to initiate temporary Medicare billing privileges. The toll-free hotline number for National Government Services is 888-802-3898 (8 a.m.-4 p.m. CT). The toll-free hotline number for Wisconsin Physician Services is 844-209-2567 (7 a.m.-4 p.m. CT).

CMS Telehealth Toolkits
CMS today released two telehealth toolkits with information for general practitioners and end-stage renal disease (ESRD) providers. The toolkits are meant for providers who are implementing telehealth services as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Information includes 1135 waiver information, general telehealth policy guidance, an implementation guide, state statute guidance, basics on telehealth setup, technical assistance, vendor selection, and patient and community resources. The general practitioner toolkit can be found here, and the ESRD provider toolkit can be found here.

HRSA FAQs on 340B Program
The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) posted FAQs regarding questions raised about the administration of the 340B program in light of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The FAQs address the 340B patient definition, telehealth services, new 340B registrations for child-sites and contract pharmacies, the group purchasing organization prohibition for disproportionate share hospitals, and 340B audits. Regarding 340B audits, HRSA is planning to conduct 340B Program audits remotely. IHA is working with the American Hospital Association and Illinois’ Medicare Administrative Contractors (MACs) to pursue delays of 340B audits.

Congress Still Negotiating COVID-19 Bill
This afternoon, for the second time in less than 24-hours, a procedural vote on a third COVID-19 legislative package failed in the U.S. Senate. Negotiations are continuing on the approximately $1.5 trillion CARES Act (the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act), which is expected to include several critical provisions for hospitals and health systems, as well as support for families, workers and businesses.

**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 or send an email to dph.siren@illinois.gov

**Latest Resources and Guidance**
- 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