March 27, 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 27, 2020

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

Situational Awareness
At today’s press briefing, the Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) announced 488 new COVID-19 cases, for a total of 3,026 cases in 40 counties statewide. Eight new deaths were reported.

President Signs COVID-19 Relief Package
President Trump this afternoon signed the $2.2 trillion CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act after the House took final action to pass the legislative package. The IHA-supported legislation includes significant funding and support for hospitals and health systems, totaling over $100 billion. See IHA’s summary of key hospital-related provisions in the package. U.S. Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth sent a letter to Illinois hospitals today recognizing the heroic efforts of hospitals and their healthcare workers, and highlighting important provisions in the CARES Act that will help hospitals deal with the unprecedented challenges of this virus.

HFS Medicaid & CHIP Eligibility Changes and Requests to Address COVID-19
To quickly expand access to healthcare services and to meet the needs of residents throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) is requesting federal approval of eligibility changes as a part of a package of requests to maximize flexibility within the Medicaid program. See an HFS Fact Sheet for details.
HFS 1115 Demonstration Waiver Request
HFS is seeking an emergency 1115 Demonstration waiver to provide the Illinois Medicaid program with federal regulatory flexibilities and federal expenditure authority to effectively address the growing COVID-19 public health emergency. The Demonstration is designed to: 1) mitigate the impact and community spread of COVID-19, 2) streamline Illinois Medicaid application processing to provide access to needed healthcare services as quickly as possible, and 3) preserve access to Medicaid coverage during the public health emergency. Among other things, the requested flexibility and authority would allow the Illinois Medicaid program to: provide coverage at no cost to the uninsured for COVID-19 treatment; eliminate out-of-pocket costs of COVID-19 treatment for the insured through secondary payer coverage; and provide temporary housing as a Medicaid benefit for individuals experiencing homelessness for the 14-day quarantine period. See an HFS Fact Sheet for more details.

IDPH: No Hospital Bypasses
A memo from IDPH to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) systems and directors says that because of the national and state disaster declarations, hospitals will not be granted bypass during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals are expected to receive patients unless a facility is experiencing an internal disaster (e.g. flooding, no heat or electricity, etc.).

N95s, Face Masks and Ventilators
IDPH has issued guidance for extended use of N95 masks, regular masks and powered, air-purifying respirators.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued a checklist for healthcare facilities on strategies for optimizing the supply of N95 respirators during the COVID-19 response.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued guidance yesterday—Enforcement Policy for Face Masks and Respirators During the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Public Health Emergency—effective immediately, to provide a policy to help expand the availability of general use face masks for the general public and particulate filtering facepiece respirators (including N95 respirators) for healthcare professionals during this pandemic.

Today, the FDA took action to help increase the supply of ventilators, ventilator tubing connectors, and ventilator accessories, as well as filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs) due to shortages during COVID-19. The FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to allow the emergency use in healthcare settings of certain ventilators, anesthesia gas machines modified for use as ventilators, and positive pressure breathing devices modified for use as ventilators (collectively referred to as “ventilators”), ventilator tubing connectors, and ventilator accessories that the FDA determines meet specified criteria for safety, performance and labeling.

State Supporting Child Care for Essential Workers
Illinois continues to assist essential workers, especially health care workers in finding childcare. A website with resources has been created for communities detailing how they can help ensure essential workers have access to the child care they need. For more information, visit: https://emergencycare.inccrra.org/.

Illinois Medical Reserve Corps
Governor Pritzker and IDPH Director Ngozi Ezike, M.D. are asking nurses, doctors, pharmacists, therapists, public health professionals, and other community members to register for the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC is a network of medical and non-medical professionals who volunteer their time to assist during public health emergencies such as the current COVID-19 outbreak. Register at illinoishelps.net.
Medical Supplies/PPE Donations in Chicago
The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is coordinating multiple opportunities for individuals, organizations and businesses to donate medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) and join the fight against COVID-19. Go to the links below to:

- Donate medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Donate other products or professional services
- Sell medical supplies and PPE

AHA’s 100 Million Mask Challenge
AHA today announced a national initiative—100 Million Mask Challenge—to secure millions of masks for the physicians, nurses and caregivers who are treating coronavirus patients and at greater risk due to a nationwide shortage of personal protective equipment. Partnering with Providence, a health system with 51 hospitals in seven Western states, the first phase of the challenge will focus on Washington State, while the national initiative will expand to cover other areas experiencing an influx of coronavirus patients. In recognition that shortages are much greater nationwide, the AHA-led initiative will, over time, expand its scope to meet the growing and ongoing challenges. Read more in a press release.

AMA, APhA and ASHP Issue COVID-19 Drug Statement
The American Medical Association, American Pharmacists Association and American Society of Health-System Pharmacists have issued a joint statement on ordering, prescribing or dispensing medications for COVID-19. The statement notes their strong opposition to “physicians and others who are prophylactically prescribing medications currently identified as potential treatments for COVID-19 (e.g., chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin) for themselves, their families, or their colleagues; and that some pharmacies and hospitals have been purchasing excessive amounts of these medications in anticipation of potentially using them for COVID-19 prevention and treatment.”

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 the State of Illinois Rapid Electronic Notification System (SIREN), 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

Resources
- IDPH webpage on COVID-19
- Illinois COIVD-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-ija.org