



September 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
In-House Counsel
Public Relations Directors

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

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

Situational Awareness

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) *announced* today 1,848 new COVID-19 cases and 22 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 279,114 in 102 counties, with a total of 8,508 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 46,391 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 3.98%. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity rate from September 16 to September 22 is 3.5%. Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours increased from 1,455 patients to 1,563 patients. Of that figure, 351 patients were in the ICU, with 144 patients on ventilators.

U.S. House Passes Continuing Resolution to Fund Government – Includes Key MAAP Provision

The U.S. House last night voted 359-57 to approve a continuing resolution to extend federal funding through Dec. 11. The bipartisan vote came just hours after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin reached a deal, which includes a provision to significantly improve the current repayment terms for the Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment Program (MAAP).

Under the provision, providers would not begin repayment for one year, after which 25% of their Medicare claims would be offset by the amount due for a period of eleven months, followed by 50% for the succeeding six months. After a period of 29 months, providers would be required to repay the remaining balance or a 4% interest rate would be applied. The effort to improve MAAP repayment terms was championed by Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL), who introduced legislation and also sent a letter to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services urging action to ease the financial burden on providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The short-term funding fix now goes to the Senate, where it's expected to easily pass before a Sept. 30 deadline to avoid a federal government shutdown.

Fourth COVID-19 Vaccine Trial in U.S. Launched

The National Institutes of Health today announced that a fourth Phase 3 clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine has begun enrolling adult volunteers. The trial is designed to evaluate if the investigational Janssen COVID-19 vaccine (JNJ-78436725) can prevent symptomatic COVID-19 after a single dose regimen. Up to 60,000 volunteers will be enrolled in the trial at up to nearly 215 clinical research sites in the U.S. and internationally.

GAO: Continuing Shortages of PPE, Testing Supplies

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has issued a new report indicating that the U.S. still faces shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing supplies due to high global demand and the fact that most supplies are made outside of the U.S. The GAO makes a series of recommendations for federal agencies related to the medical supply chain, vaccines and therapeutics, COVID-19 data, economic impact payments, the Coronavirus Relief Fund, guidance for K-12 schools, tracking contract obligations, and cybersecurity weaknesses.

ECRI: Up to 70% of KN95s from China Don't Meet U.S. Standards

ECRI, an independent patient safety organization, says up to 70% of KN95 masks it tested do not meet U.S. standards for effectiveness, raising risks of contracting COVID-19 for providers and patients at hospitals and other healthcare organizations that imported KN95 masks from China. ECRI says it found that 60% to 70% of imported KN95 masks do not filter 95% of aerosol particulates, contrary to what their name suggests.

ECRI researchers say the KN95s can be used in lieu of surgical or procedure masks for activities that involve limited contact with bodily fluids (because KN95s are not intended for fluid repellency), and they may provide superior respiratory protection. ECRI warns U.S. healthcare organizations, however, to use KN95s or other non-NIOSH-certified masks only as a last resort when treating known or suspected COVID-19 patients.

Changing COVID-19 Age Distribution

A new Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms the shift in COVID-19 incidence to younger people. Early in the pandemic, COVID-19 incidence was highest among older adults.

During June-August 2020, COVID-19 incidence was highest in persons aged 20-29 years, who accounted for more than 20% of all confirmed cases. The median age of COVID-19 cases declined from 46 years in May to 37 years in July and 38 in August. Younger adults likely contribute to community transmission of COVID-19.

The report says strict adherence to community mitigation strategies and personal preventive behaviors by younger adults is needed to help reduce infection and subsequent transmission to persons at higher risk for severe illness.

Wisconsin Added to Chicago, Cook County Travel Orders

Chicago and Cook County public health officials have added Wisconsin to their respective emergency travel quarantine orders (*Chicago order*, *Suburban Cook County order*), effective this Friday. Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers yesterday declared a new public health emergency in his state due to a recent surge in COVID-19 cases among young people, particularly on college campuses, and extended Wisconsin's mask mandate until Nov. 21. Also added to the Chicago and Cook County travel orders are Minnesota, Montana and Idaho; Puerto Rico has been added to the County order.

Illinois Physician Survey Rates COVID-19 Risk for Daily Activities

A recent physician poll assesses COVID-19 risk across a variety of daily activities. The *Illinois State Medical Society* and Illinois Medical Professionals Action Collaborative Team surveyed physicians asking them to rate several activities for COVID-19 exposure risk – on a one (very low) to five (very high) scale. Survey participants were asked to offer two ratings, the first assuming masks and social distancing were followed (when feasible), and the second assuming no mask or social distancing. *The findings* underscore the value of mask use and social distancing to prevent COVID-19 transmission. The survey results also reinforced that physicians believe socially focused events and actions pose a higher degree of risk.

CDC Issues Guidance on Halloween, Holidays

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued *guidance* on Halloween and fall/winter holiday celebrations. The CDC says many traditional Halloween activities are higher risk for COVID-19 spread, including trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door, attending crowded indoor costume parties, and going to an indoor haunted house. The CDC advises that persons who may have COVID-19 or may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 not to participate in in-person Halloween festivities and not to give out candy to trick-or-treaters.

Concerning upcoming holidays, the CDC says “When planning to host a holiday celebration, you should assess current COVID-19 levels in your community to determine whether to postpone, cancel, or limit the number of attendees.”

Resources

- [IDPH COVID-19 webpage](#) and [Coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://www.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