December 30, 2020

ILLINOIS HEALTH AND HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
MEMORANDUM

TO: Chief Executive Officers, Member Hospitals and Health Systems
    Chief Operating Officers
    Chief Medical Officers
    Chief Nurse Executives
    Human Resource Directors
    In-House Counsel

FROM: A.J. Wilhelmi, President & CEO
        Tim Nuding, Senior Vice President, Member Services and Corporate Finance

SUBJECT: State COVID-19 Surge Staffing Pool

The State of Illinois has entered into contracts with several private staffing agencies to create a pool of medical staffing professionals that could be utilized to add hospital bed capacity, if necessary, in COVID-19 hotspot areas throughout Illinois.

Yesterday, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) emailed hospitals with information regarding the program.

The staffing pool is being administered by the State. Hospitals accessing staff from the pool will be required to reimburse the State for the cost of the staff. Staffing allocation decisions will be made by state agencies based on a pre-determined set of criteria. Factors that will be taken into consideration are listed on page 16 of the attached HFS PowerPoint presentation (click here) and include county COVID rate, facility bed capacity status, facility expansion capacity and facility COVID rate.

The staffing pool concept surfaced after input from the hospital community noting that barriers to expanding hospital capacity were more attributable to staffing limitations than space limitations. At the request of the hospital community, provisions are included in the contracts to avoid poaching of in-state staff.

Last week, several state agencies collaborated to host a webinar on the state’s staffing pool which was attended by over 300 hospital representatives. Click here to see a video recording of the webinar (the meeting starts at the 9:30 mark), and click here to see the PowerPoint presentation used during the webinar.
To make staffing requests, HFS is asking hospitals to use this “Hospital Request Form” (click here) and submit the form to the Regional Healthcare Coordinator. If staffing requests are approved, a staffing vendor will contact the facility directly. If the staffing request is not able to be filled, hospitals will be notified accordingly.

Staffing contracts include varying hourly rates, but hospitals can expect to encounter the following costs if requests are made:

- Registered Nurses: $165/hr, up to $195/hr
- Licensed Practical Nurses: $95/hr, up to $160/hr
- Certified Nurse Assistants: $65/hr, up to $110/hr
- Respiratory Therapists: $140/hr, up to $165/hr

If you have questions regarding the program, contact surgestaffing@illinois.gov. For additional contacts, see page 22 of the PowerPoint presentation.