IHA Daily Briefing: May 28

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Illinois Moving to Phase 3 Reopening Tomorrow

Chicago Moving to Phase 3 Reopening June 3

House Hearing on COVID-19 Impact on Minority Communities

Joint Commission Surveys and Reviews Resume in June

COVID-19 Funding Attestation Deadline Extended

State, National and Global COVID-19 Update

IHA Overview of General Assembly’s Spring 2020 Session

IHA Partner: Staffing Solutions Now and After COVID-19

Illinois Moving to Phase 3 Reopening Tomorrow

At his daily press briefing this afternoon, Governor J.B. Pritzker said all regions of the state will move to Phase 3 of his five-phase Restore Illinois reopening plan tomorrow. The 28-day tracking period for all four regions will reset tomorrow, meaning the earliest any region can move into Phase 4 is June 26. The metrics to move to the next phase are the same as they were for moving to Phase 3: the percentage of positive tests must remain below 20% and not increase by more than 10 percentage points for 14 days; hospital admissions for COVID-19 must remain flat (not increase) for 28 days; and hospital surge capacity for ICU and medical/surgical beds and ventilators must be at least 14%.

Chicago Moving to Phase 3 Reopening June 3

Mayor Lori Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) today announced that Chicago is on track to go to Phase 3 of the “Protecting Chicago” framework and begin reopening on Wednesday, June 3.

“Throughout the pandemic, I have been overwhelmed by the service and sacrifice made by countless Chicagoans from every corner of our city and every walk of life,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Our ability to meet this moment would not have been possible without the work and passion of countless other Chicagoans who stepped up for their city during our time of need. It’s because of all these efforts that Chicago is poised to begin cautiously reopening on June 3.”

CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D., will issue a public health order extending the Governor’s Stay-at-Home Order in the city until Chicago reopens on June 3.

City officials say cautiously reopening in Phase 3 will still require strict physical distancing but begin to allow for some industries to start reopening. All Chicago residents should continue to physically distance and wear a face covering; limit non-business, social gatherings to fewer than 10 persons; stay at home if feeling ill or coming into contact with someone with COVID-19; and get a test if developing symptoms.

To allow businesses and organizations to prepare for the reopening, on Tuesday, the city released industry-specific guidelines for businesses, employees, and customers to follow as they begin to safely reopen on June 3.

House Hearing on COVID-19 Impact on Minority Communities

Yesterday, the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee held a virtual hearing focusing on the disproportionate impact COVID-19 is having on communities of color.

During the hearing, Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL-10) said, “COVID is not the cause of the disparities we are seeing in the crisis, rather, existing inequities, the systemic biases in our society, created the circumstances that enabled the virus to rapidly spread in minority communities and resulted in a greater likelihood of negative outcomes when people in these communities do get sick.”
In a statement submitted for the record, the American Hospital Association shared information on hospitals’ and health systems’ work to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as recommendations for additional federal initiatives to address disparities related to COVID-19.

Witnesses at the hearing were: Thomas Dean Sequist, M.D., chief patient experience and equity officer at Mass General Brigham and professor of medicine and health care policy at Harvard Medical School; James Hildreth, M.D., president and CEO of Meharry Medical College; Ibram Kendi, from the Antiracist Research & Policy Center at American University; Raynald Samoa, M.D., of City of Hope in Los Angeles; Alicia Fernandez, M.D., from the University of California San Francisco; and Douglas Holtz-Eakin of the American Action Forum.

Joint Commission Surveys and Reviews Resume in June
The Joint Commission will begin resuming regular surveys and reviews in June. Account executives will begin to contact organizations due for a survey to assess the impact that the coronavirus pandemic had on their operations and their current state. The Joint Commission is reviewing a variety of factors and criteria for determining where and which organizations will be surveyed, including identifying and then prioritizing low-risk areas in which it can go in safely to survey. The Joint Commission also says the survey process will look somewhat different, as it will need to employ physical distancing practices to ensure the safety of all parties. For more details, see a statement.

COVID-19 Funding Attestation Deadline Extended
Earlier this week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) extended the deadline for healthcare providers to attest to receipt of payments from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund and accept the terms and conditions. Providers now have 90 days from the date of receipt to attest and accept the terms and conditions or return the funds. Please note that this extension does not impact the June 3 deadline by which providers must submit revenue information to support receiving an additional payment from the Provider Relief Fund $50 billion General Distribution.

State, National and Global COVID-19 Update
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today 1,527 new COVID-19 cases and 104 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 115,833 in 100 counties, with a total of 5,186 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 25,993 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 5.9%. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity from May 21-27 is 8.3%. Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours decreased from 3,826 patients to 3,649. Of that figure, 1,009 patients are in the ICU, with 576 patients on ventilators.

Current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) figures show nearly 1.7 million confirmed and presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. in 55 states and U.S. territories, with 100,446 deaths.

Today’s WHO Situation Report shows more than 5.59 million COVID-19 cases globally, with over 353,000 deaths. The Region of the Americas (includes the U.S.) continues to lead the world with more than 2.55 million cases and over 148,000 deaths.

IHA Overview of General Assembly’s Spring 2020 Session
Earlier today, IHA sent members a detailed overview of the key bills and issues that IHA worked on during the just completed spring session of the General Assembly to ensure the best possible outcomes for the community. Please click here to see the overview. In an extraordinary and unprecedented special session during the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly compressed what is normally a five-month session into four days. Considering the challenging environment and circumstances, this was a successful spring session for the hospital community.

IHA Partner: Staffing Solutions Now and After COVID-19
Healthcare professionals—from frontline workers to support staff—have stepped up to the challenge of COVID-19. With hospital staffing central to battling the virus, IHA Strategic Partner FocusOne Solutions can help leaders achieve a key goal in the process: efficiency.

In a recent blog post, FocusOne outline how a managed services provider (MSP) can take the weight off hospital and health
system leaders in search of qualified staff during the crisis—and during normal operations. FocusOne, a leading MSP, helps healthcare clients scale up or down by:

- Working directly with your human resources department or talent acquisition team to source job candidates;
- Leveraging its national network of staffing agencies who recruit and onboard candidates; and
- Filling both temporary and permanent positions for clinical and non-clinical roles.

FocusOne helps hospitals in Illinois and nationwide reduce costs, streamline the hiring process and bring in top-tier healthcare professionals. IHA forged a strategic relationship with FocusOne in June 2018 based on our review and feedback from Illinois hospitals that already utilized its services.

As the blog post on COVID-19 staffing notes, “partnering with an MSP that is ready to spring into action is a tool that many facilities have discovered, especially at a time like this, is essential to their successful business and staffing model.”

Find out how FocusOne’s approach—one contact, one contract, one invoice and one process—can benefit your organization. To learn more, watch an IHA video and see our flyer.

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