



IHA Daily Briefing: Sept 15

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

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CMS Withdraws MFAR

Late Monday, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma [announced via Twitter](#) that the agency is withdrawing the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule (MFAR), which would have drastically limited how states finance their Medicaid programs.

“We’ve listened closely to concerns that have been raised by our state and provider partners about potential unintended consequences of the proposed rule, which require further study. Therefore, CMS is withdrawing the rule from the regulatory agenda,” Verma said in her Tweet.

IHA strongly opposed MFAR and joined our state and national partners in [advocating](#) to block the rule in the next COVID-19 legislative package

Illinois Delegation Members Urge HHS to Protect 340B

More than 240 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, including 14 from Illinois, co-signed a [letter](#) sent yesterday to Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar urging immediate action to ensure hospitals and other covered entities continue to receive discounts through the 340B program. The letter is in response to recent announcements by several pharmaceutical companies that they will limit or restrict 340B pricing to providers using contract pharmacy arrangements, among other actions.

“As Members of Congress deeply committed to the important safety net mission of the 340B Drug Pricing Program, it is imperative that immediate action is taken to ensure covered entities continue to receive crucial 340B drug discounts. These providers rely on 340B savings to ensure access to care for low-income and rural patients. The recent actions undermine the intended purpose of the 340B Drug Pricing Program. [HHS] must take immediate action to stop these companies from either denying or limiting access to 340B pricing to hospitals, health centers, and clinics participating in 340B,” members of Congress wrote in the letter.

IHA thanks Illinois hospitals and health systems for reaching out to U.S. House members in the delegation in support of the letter. The following representatives co-signed the letter: Mike Bost (IL-12); Cheri Bustos (IL-17); Sean Casten (IL-6); Danny Davis (IL-7); Rodney Davis (IL-13); Bill Foster (IL-11); Chuy Garcia (IL-4); Raja Krishnamoorthi (IL-8); Daniel Lipinski (IL-3); Mike Quigley (IL-5); Bobby Rush (IL-1); Jan Schakowsky (IL-9); and Lauren Underwood (IL-14).

Hospital Licensing Waivers Altered through Emergency Rules

On September 4, IDPH filed emergency rules (Sept. 4 *Illinois Register*, pages 14333 - 14349) repealing certain prior emergency rules related to Governor Pritzker's *Executive Order 2020-52*, which extended many of the executive orders related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including hospital licensing waivers. This may have caused some confusion.

Although the September 4 emergency rules repeal the existing emergency rules, several of the emergency waivers have, in fact, been extended under a separate emergency rule released on September 11 (Sept. 11 *Illinois Register*, pages 14804 - 14823) and retroactive to August 24. See an *IHA memo* for more details.

COVID-19 FEMA Public Assistance Program

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is encouraging all hospitals to review and apply for the COVID-19 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance Program. See the *COVID-19 Process Overview - Public Assistance Recipient Quick Guide* and *Region V PA COVID-19 Resource Reference Guide*. For more information or questions, contact Raymond Mason, Illinois Public Assistance Group Supervisor, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security/FEMA IMCORE at 202-251-8559 or raymond.mason@fema.dhs.gov.

Update on Cook County, Chicago Contact Tracing Programs

As part of its contact tracing initiative, Cook County Dept. of Public Health, together with the Hektoen Institute of Medicine, announced on Friday that it has released a Request for Proposals for community-based organizations serving in suburban Cook County areas most affected by COVID-19. As much as \$5.4 million will be awarded to provide contact tracing, beginning in December. The Suburban Cook County COVID-19 Contact Tracing Community Supports Program aims to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 and lessen its impacts, through:

- Education and outreach to priority communities and populations;
- Expansion of existing programs and services that can help households isolate and quarantine, or address social and economic challenges; and
- Increased availability and access to testing.

Meanwhile, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced at a press conference yesterday the establishment of the Contact Tracing Corps and Resource Coordination Hub, naming 31 community-based organizations that will hire contact tracers from areas of economic hardship to form the Corps. The contact tracers will work with the Hub to refer diagnosed persons and those they may have been in sustained contact with to testing, treatment and other resources.

Feds Adjust COVID-19 Entry for International Air Passengers

As of yesterday, the federal government removed requirements for directing all flights carrying airline passengers arriving from, or recently had a presence in, certain countries to land at one of 15 designated airports and halting enhanced entry health screening for these passengers.

Previously, enhanced entry health screening was conducted for those arriving from, or with recent presence in, China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau), Iran, the Schengen region of Europe, the United Kingdom (excluding overseas territories outside of Europe), Ireland, and Brazil. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says "symptom-based screening has limited effectiveness because people with COVID-19 may have no symptoms or fever at the time of screening, or only mild symptoms. Transmission of the virus may occur from passengers who have no symptoms or who have not yet developed

symptoms of infection. Therefore, CDC is shifting its strategy and prioritizing other public health measures to reduce the risk of travel-related disease transmission.”

CDC COCA Call on Influenza During COVID-19 Pandemic

A CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) call on “*Testing and Treatment of 2020-2021 Seasonal Influenza During the COVID-19 Pandemic*” will be held this Thursday, September 17 at 1 p.m. CDT. During this COCA call, clinicians will hear an overview of CDC’s recommendations for healthcare providers regarding influenza diagnostics and the use of antiviral medications for the 2020-2021 influenza season, including considerations during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Webinar Link: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1604984692> external icon

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Webinar ID: 160 498 4692

State, National, Global COVID-19 Updates

The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) announced today 1,466 new COVID-19 cases and 20 deaths. The total number of cases in the state is 264,210 in 102 counties, with a total of 8,332 deaths. IDPH says that in the past 24 hours, 39,031 test specimens have been processed, with a positivity rate of 3.75%. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity rate from September 8 to September 14 is 3.6%. Statewide COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 24 hours increased from 1,431 patients to 1,584 patients. Of that figure, 373 patients were in the ICU, with 144 patients on ventilators.

Today’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) figures show more than 6.53 million confirmed and presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 in the U.S., with 194,092 deaths.

Today’s WHO Coronavirus Disease Dashboard shows more than 29.1 million COVID-19 cases globally, with more than 926,000 deaths. The Region of the Americas (includes the U.S.) continues to lead the world with more than 14.9 million cases and more than 513,000 deaths.

Healthy Chicago 2025 Launch on Thursday

Healthy Chicago 2025 will be launched virtually on Thursday, Sept. 17 at 2:30 p.m. Healthy Chicago 2025 is a plan for the local public health system – including community groups, government agencies, businesses, faith-based organizations, researchers, community development professionals, health and social service providers, and others – to eliminate the racial life expectancy gap and help all Chicagoans enjoy longer, safer, healthier lives. Register [here](#).

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