Perinatal Levels of Care Designations

January 3, 2017

Memorandum

A taskforce of the Illinois Department of Public Health’s (IDPH) Perinatal Advisory Committee (PAC) has been looking at the issue of the state’s perinatal levels of care designation system and whether to align Illinois with the 2012 American Academy of Pediatrics’ (AAP) levels of care.

As part of this year-long study, IDPH surveyed 120 hospitals with neonatal centers utilizing the Levels of Care Assessment Tool (LOCATe) developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The purpose of using LOCATe was to get a snapshot of where hospitals might fit into the AAP levels of care. All 120 hospitals responded to the survey.

IHA, as a member of the task force and a hospital representative, raised questions and concerns and ultimately voted against moving to adopt the AAP levels of care designations at this time given the lack of clear need and purpose for the change.

Our concerns included:

- AAP levels of care do not maintain the Level IIE designation that currently exists
- How the change in designations would impact rural hospitals, where more than half of Illinois counties lack obstetric beds

The task force, however, decided to move forward with its recommendation, which was ultimately approved by the full PAC at its October 2016 meeting. An official recommendation was sent to the IDPH Director.

IDPH indicates that changing designations will be a lengthy and transparent process likely taking two years. No immediate action will be taken to change the levels of care.

IHA will host a conference call with IDPH on January 24, 2017 to provide background and the reasons for the recommendation, analysis of the LOCATe survey responses, how to obtain hospital-specific results, and next steps.

IDPH is seeking volunteers to serve on working groups related to the change in perinatal levels of care. The five working groups are:

- Site Visits
- Levels 1 and 2
- Levels 3 and 4
- Transfers
- Designation, Redesignation and Transfer of Network

These working groups will meet every other month in 2017 with the goal of providing recommendations to the full PAC by the end of the year.

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