

# IHA COVID Resources and Advocacy

July 28, 2020

## The latest about COVID-19 from IHA

### Iowa economic recovery work group sessions include focus on health care

The governor's Economic Recovery Advisory Board was recently created to coordinate efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to rebuild and grow the Iowa economy. As part of this board, the Public Health and Healthcare Work Group was created to examine health care issues.

Specifically, the work group will address:

- Assessing and measuring the recovery, pandemic response and preparedness.
- Improving the health of Iowans through understanding social determinants of health and developing strategies to affect outcomes.
- Strengthening access points, including the recruitment and retention of clinicians, to ensure rural Iowans have access to care and specialty care.

The work group is divided into subgroups that focus on:

- Access to care for Iowans with a focus on partnerships and rural/urban care.
- Pandemic preparation and response.
- Supporting the unique needs of every Iowan.
- Workforce.

A series of work group listening sessions are scheduled. The full list can be found [HERE](#). Two important listening sessions of interest to hospitals are scheduled Thursday, July 30:

- 9-11 am, Access to Care for Iowans: Rural/Urban
- 2-4 pm, Workforce

These listening sessions, and the recommendations that emerge, will be highly influential in determining future health care policy. Hospital CEOs are encouraged to attend these sessions and provide their thoughts on the needs of hospitals, patients and communities. IHA staff will attend these sessions to give insight into policies that will create a positive impact as Iowa responds to and recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Written feedback also will be accepted.

Hospitals are represented on the work group. The work group is led by Suresh Gunasekaran, CEO, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, and Kelly Garcia, director, Iowa Department of Human Services. Other hospital CEOs involved in the work group are Robb Gardner, CEO, Henry County Health Center, and Matt Wenzel, CEO, Great River Health. Gunasekaran and Gardner are members of IHA's Board of Officers and Trustees.

### IHA urges senators to ensure hospitals receive support in next COVID-19 legislation

Leaders in Congress are now working on the next COVID-19 legislative package with the goal of sending it to the president before the August recess. Please [reach out](#) to Iowa's senators and urge them to include Medicare accelerated-payments

forgiveness and Iowa's [rural emergency hospital](#) proposal in the bill.

The expansion of Medicare accelerated payments in the CARES Act has been a critical component in hospitals surviving during the pandemic, and Congress now needs to show support for hospitals by making these payments forgivable. Congress also needs to begin planning for long-term, sustainable support for hospitals by including Iowa's rural emergency hospital proposal in the next legislation. This proposal would allow for a new designation to give hospitals the option to provide all services offered by critical access hospitals, except inpatient care. The proposal also supports access to care in rural areas of the state by maintaining essential services and providing adequate reimbursement for services.

After reaching out, please share any responses with [Erin Cubit](#) at IHA.

### **HHS renews public health emergency for COVID-19**

HHS yesterday [extended](#) the COVID-19 public health emergency designation for another 90 days. Significant funding and regulatory relief for hospitals and other health care providers are tied to the emergency, which was set to expire tomorrow.

The renewal gives the health care industry certainty through the fall on several key pandemic response policies:

- A 20% Medicare inpatient add-on payment for COVID-19 patients.
- A mandate that insurers cover medically necessary COVID-19 tests without cost-sharing.
- Increased federal Medicaid matching funds for states.
- Relaxed telehealth restrictions.
- Section 1135 waivers that give providers additional flexibility to respond to COVID-19.

The length of the public health emergency length is connected to CMS' adjustments to the Medicare Shared Savings Program for accountable care organizations. The number of months the emergency lasts affects the amount of shared losses an accountable care organization must pay back to CMS.

The public health emergency doesn't affect when providers must spend their grants from the provider relief fund.

### **State announces #StepUpMaskUpIA campaign**

Iowa is launching an initiative to encourage residents to wear masks in public to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The announcement came yesterday as the state surpassed 40,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 815 deaths. More than 28,800 people have recovered, the health department reported. #StepUpMaskUpIA comes as Iowa school districts announce their plans to return to school next month, and as some major companies, such as Walmart, Aldi, Best Buy, Costco, Home Depot, Kohls, Lowe's, Menards, Panera and Starbucks, begin requiring shoppers to wear masks in their stores. Hy-Vee, while not requiring masks, is handing out 3 million masks at its stores to shoppers who want them.

### **Communicating From Behind the Mask**

*11:30 am-12:30 pm Thursday, July 30*

This complimentary webinar will focus on the story of communication among a patient, his family and his physician during his almost two-month battle against COVID-19. Barbara Burnes, director of the workforce development and service excellence departments at Floyd Medical Center in Rome, Georgia, will give participants tips for communicating behind the mask. Register [HERE](#).

### **CEO update call**

The next CEO update call is scheduled from **1-2 pm Wednesday, July 29**. Register [here](#).

Click here for the latest  
**COVID-19**  
**Resources**



IOWA HOSPITAL  
ASSOCIATION

*We care about Iowa's health*



Iowa Hospital Association  
100 E. Grand Ave., Suite 100  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1800

[Unsubscribe](#)

