

IHA COVID Resources and Advocacy

April 20, 2020

The latest about COVID-19 from IHA

AHA, others issue road map for safely resuming elective surgeries

As the COVID-19 surge wanes in different parts of the country, the AHA, American College of Surgeons, American Society of Anesthesiologists and Association of periOperative Registered Nurses have developed a road map to guide readiness, prioritization and scheduling of elective surgeries.

Readiness for resuming these procedures will vary by location depending on local COVID-19 activity and response resources. A [joint statement](#) provides key principles and considerations to guide health care professionals and organizations.

The statement notes facilities should not resume elective procedures until there has been a sustained reduction in the rate of new COVID-19 cases in the area for at least 14 days. Facilities also should have adequate numbers of trained staff and supplies, including personal protective equipment, beds, ICUs and ventilators to treat nonelective patients without resorting to a crisis-level standard of care.

Other recommendations from the statement include:

- Adopt COVID-19-informed policies for the five phases of surgical care, from preoperative to post-discharge care planning.
- Collect and assess COVID-19-related data that will be used to frequently re-evaluate and reassess policies and procedures.
- Create and implement a social-distancing policy for staff, patients and visitors in unrestricted areas in anticipation of a second wave of COVID-19 activity.
- Form a committee that includes surgery, anesthesiology and nursing leadership to develop a surgery prioritization policy. The policy should consider previously canceled and postponed cases, and allot block time for priority cases, such as cancer and living donor organ transplants.
- Implement a policy for testing staff and patients for COVID-19, accounting for accuracy and availability of testing and a response when a staff member or patient tests positive.

IDPH updates COVID-19 testing framework for Iowa

IDPH released an update to its testing framework for COVID-19 on April 17. Health care providers now can test patients for COVID-19 infection at national reference laboratories. If providers choose to test a patient through a national reference laboratory, there is no need to call IDPH for approval. The specimens should be sent directly to the reference laboratory. If a patient tests positive for COVID-19 through a national reference laboratory, the ordering provider must notify IDPH immediately, before giving the patient the results, by calling 800-362-2736.

The State Hygienic Laboratory will continue to perform COVID-19 testing for:

- Adults older than 60 with fever or respiratory symptoms and chronic medical conditions.
- Health care workers, essential services personnel, first responders and critical infrastructure workers with fever or respiratory illness.
- Hospitalized patients before discharge to long-term care facilities or other nursing-care facilities.
- Hospitalized patients with fever or respiratory illness for diagnosis.
- People with fever or respiratory illness who live in a congregate setting.

If patients meet the testing criteria, the specimen should be submitted to the State Hygienic Laboratory according to their [guidance](#). Providers no longer need to contact IDPH for testing approval before submission to the State Hygienic Laboratory. To conserve limited public health resources, only specimens from patients meeting the testing criteria should be submitted to the State Hygienic Laboratory.

SHIP provides funding opportunities for qualifying hospitals

The Small Rural Hospital Improvement Grant Program (SHIP) is providing funding to hospitals that meet SHIP's [eligibility requirements](#). Applications must be received by Tuesday, April 21. Each grant is \$84,317. Recipients cannot use grant funds for costs that are reimbursed or compensated by other federal or state programs that provide for such benefits, including the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program, the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund and unemployment compensation. Click [here](#) for examples of approved fund uses.

For more information about the application process, email [Cassie Kennedy](#) at IDPH.

Free webinar opportunities

- 1-2 pm Wednesday, April 22, ***Inspiration Speakers Series: Don't Just Survive – Thrive!*** Holly Hoffman was the last woman standing on Season 21 of CBS' hit reality show Survivor: Nicaragua. Author of "Your Winner Within" and "Write Yourself a Note," Holly acknowledges that life is made up of challenges, and we are oftentimes faced with situations that seem insurmountable. But in each of us is an ability to focus our thoughts, emotions and energy to succeed. Register [here](#).
- 9-10:30 am Thursday, April 23, ***SBA Funding Options for Physicians and Other Providers Under the CARES Act.*** The Small Business Administration (SBA) loan program available under the CARES Act plugs into an existing infrastructure. This webinar will help participants understand the eligibility criteria, including SBA affiliation rules applicable to SBA assistance, requirements imposed on receipt of funds under these programs and the consequences of providing false, misleading or fraudulent information in an application. Register [here](#).
- 10-11 am Thursday, April 23, ***Furloughs, Layoffs and a Grab Bag of Evolving COVID-19 Employment Issues.*** JoEllen Whitney, a senior shareholder with the Davis Brown Law Firm, will focus on recent legal issues with paid leave, job service and the effect of full and partial layoffs. She also will provide updates on issues under the CARES Act and job service including communication strategies for health care employees. Register [here](#).
- 1:30-3 pm Thursday, April 30, ***HRSA Telehealth Learning Series: Telehealth in the Time of COVID-19.*** Provided by the Health Resources and Services Administration. Register [here](#).

CEO update call

The next hospital CEO call is scheduled for 1 pm Wednesday, April 22. Click [here](#) to register.

IHA COVID-19 resource webpage

For current information about COVID-19, visit IHA's [resource page](#).

Previous IHA Updates on COVID-19

- [April 16 Update](#)
- [April 15 Update](#)
- [April 14 Update](#)

[April 13 Update](#)

- [April 10 Update](#)
 - [April 9 Update](#)
 - [April 8 Update](#)
 - [April 7 Update](#)
 - [April 6 Update](#)
 - [April 3 Update](#)
 - [April 2, Update](#)
 - [April 1 Update](#)
 - [March 31 Update](#)
 - [March 30 Update](#)
 - [March 27 Update](#)
 - [March 26 Update](#)
 - [March 25 Update](#)
 - [March 24 Update](#)
 - [March 23 Update](#)
 - [March 22 Update](#)
 - [March 20 Update](#)
 - [March 19 Update](#)
 - [March 18 Update](#)
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Iowa Hospital Association
100 E. Grand Ave., Suite 100
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1800

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