

IHA COVID Resources and Advocacy

April 22, 2020

The latest about COVID-19 from IHA

Senate passes coronavirus relief bill

Today, the U.S. Senate released language for the next set of legislation in response to COVID-19. The pending legislation includes funding for the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act. Specifically, the bill includes:

- \$75 billion for hospitals and health care providers.
- \$25 billion in funds for expanding the capacity of COVID-19 tests including:
 - \$1 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
 - \$1.8 billion for the National Institutes of Health to develop and improve testing technology.
 - \$11 billion for states and localities to support testing and tracing contacts.
 - \$825 million for community health centers and rural health centers.
 - Up to \$1 billion to cover costs of testing for uninsured patients.
- An increase from \$349 billion to more than \$670 billion in appropriations for the Paycheck Protection Program.

At this point, it is not clear if public hospitals that are also 501(c)(3) organizations are eligible to participate in the Paycheck Protection Program. IHA remains in contact with Iowa's congressional delegation to advocate for this clarification and will continue to provide updates. The bill is expected to be voted on by the House Thursday morning.

Gov. Reynolds announces new COVID-19 testing regime

Today, Gov. Kim Reynolds launched the Test Iowa Initiative, with an [online portal](#) to increase Iowa's COVID-19 testing capabilities. The portal will allow Iowans to conduct self-assessments to determine the need for testing. If the self-assessment tool indicated an Iowan needs a test, they can obtain it at a testing site. The first testing site will open Saturday, April 25, in downtown Des Moines. Gov. Reynolds said the testing program will allow the state to administer an additional 3,000 tests per day and she reported the state will own the data collected through the program. The Test Iowa Initiative was developed by the Iowa Department of Public Health and a consortium of private companies including DOMO, Qualtrics, Co-Diagnostics, NomiHealth, RPH Engineering and SafeLane Health.

Gov. Reynolds and the Iowa Department of Public Health also reported 482 additional positive tests for COVID-19 with four more people having died from the disease. There are now 3,641 positive tests for COVID-19 in Iowa and 83 deaths.

To view Gov. Reynolds official announcement of the Test Iowa Initiative, click [here](#).

CEO update call

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

New flexibility for rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers

Congress and CMS have made changes to rural health clinic and federally qualified health center requirements and payments to provide support to their patients during COVID-19. These changes include:

- Expanding virtual communication services to include online digital evaluation and management services using patient portals.
- Revising home health agency shortage area requirements for visiting nursing services.

For complete information about the changes, please see the RHC/FQHC COVID-19 FAQs [here](#).

Tax credit information available from IRS

The IRS has issued several resources about COVID-19 tax credits on their website. [Information](#) specific to businesses and tax-exempt entities includes:

- Coronavirus-related paid leave for workers and tax credits for small- and mid-size businesses.
- Employee retention credit availability for many businesses financially affected by COVID-19.
- Filing and payment deadline extension (to July 15, 2020).

An FAQ about how to qualify for the employee-retention tax credit is [here](#).

FDA authorizes first at-home coronavirus diagnostic test

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [has authorized](#) the first at-home coronavirus diagnostic test that allows people to collect their samples and mail them to a laboratory. The FDA granted an emergency-use authorization to LabCorp, which plans to make its home collection kits available in most states, with a physician's order, in the next few weeks. Users can collect samples and mail them to LabCorp for testing. Results will be available in two to four days. This is not a general authorization for at-home collection of patient samples using other collection swabs, media or tests, or for tests fully conducted at home.

Free webinar opportunities

- Noon-1 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](#).
- 9-10:30 am Tuesday, April 28, **Latest Stark Law Updates, Including Recent CMS Waivers.** This webinar will cover the Physician Self-Referral Law (the Stark Law), including the latest developments, as well as discuss the status of proposed regulatory reforms and the recent CMS waivers associated with COVID-19. Register [here](#).
- Noon-1 pm Wednesday, April 29, **Inspiration Speakers Series: Kevin Kush.** Kush has been involved in coaching and teaching for more than 30 years. He spent 21 of those years working with at-risk youth at Boys Town in Omaha, Nebraska. As a head football coach, he compiled a remarkable record of 164 wins and just 58 losses with 13 of those teams finishing in the top 10. Kush was featured on ABC World News Tonight as their Person of the Week. 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](#).

IHA COVID-19 resource webpage

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

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