

# IHA COVID Resources and Advocacy

March 31, 2020

## The latest about COVID-19 from IHA

### **CMS expands its accelerated- and advance-payment program**

This weekend, CMS released new guidance on how the administration will make up-front Medicare reimbursements to providers and expedite payments during the coronavirus pandemic. A provision in the "CARES Act" (H.R. 748) expands an existing program in traditional fee-for-service Medicare to help providers experiencing financial difficulty. Cash-strapped providers and hospitals now can start applying for federal funds as a financial cushion for up to three months and would have 120 days to repay the money. Children's hospitals, inpatient acute care hospitals and select others can ask for money to cover a six-month period, and critical access hospitals qualify for a 25% rate bump for their requested payments. Independent Medicare contractors that typically process their claims will expedite their review and make approved payments within seven days of the application. CMS will automatically deduct the claim amount from the hospital's or physician's outstanding loan balance after 120 days.

To qualify for accelerated or advance payments, the provider or supplier must:

- Have billed Medicare for claims within 180 days immediately before the signature date on the provider's/supplier's request form.
- Not be in bankruptcy.
- Not be under active medical review or program integrity investigation.
- Not have any outstanding delinquent Medicare overpayments.

An informational fact sheet on the accelerated- and advance-payment process and how to submit a request is [here](#).

### **COVID-19 cases in Iowa grow**

Eighty-eight additional positive cases of Iowans with COVID-19, for a total of 424 positive cases are being reported by IDHP. Two Iowans with COVID-19 died Sunday; both elderly adults (81+) in eastern Iowa. A total of 6,162 negative tests have been reported to date, which includes testing reported by the State Hygienic Lab and other labs. A status report of monitoring and testing of COVID19 in Iowa is provided by IDPH and can be found [here](#). In addition, a public hotline has been established for Iowans with questions about COVID-19. The line is available 24/7 by calling 211 or 800-244-7431.

### **New funding to invest up to \$5 million to evaluate health system response to COVID-19**

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has published two notices about funding opportunities to support research that can empower health system leaders, providers and policymakers in treating patients and allocating critical resources for COVID-19. AHRQ will make available [up to \\$5 million in new funds](#) to evaluate innovations and challenges in rapidly expanding telehealth in response to COVID-19. AHRQ also will make [at least \\$2.5 million available to active AHRQ grants and cooperative agreements](#).

### **Additional hospital data requested by VP and training offered**

Additional data is being requested from hospitals by Vice President Pence to aid in informing the federal response efforts. This additional data includes:

- Daily reporting to the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) COVID-19 Module.
- COVID-19 test-result reporting for hospitals doing “in-house” testing.

Information about how to report to the NHSN module has been sent to NHSN users and all hospitals are urged to have representation on a training webinar scheduled Tuesday. The Iowa Healthcare Collaborative also has sent supplementary documents to help hospitals and their teams. More details regarding hospital reporting can be found in this [important letter](#).

NHSN training information:

**Title:** NHSN Patient Impact and Hospital Capacity Module

**Date:** Tuesday, March 31

**Time:** 1-2 pm CDT

**Webstreaming details:** To join the training, visit <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/VWBXKBR8af4>[external icon](#).

### **Testing and PPE updates on IHA resource page**

Updates for the expanded use or reuse of personal protective equipment including face masks and cleaning of N-95 masks were recently released by the FDA and the U.S. Public Health Service. Please visit IHA's [COVID-19 resource webpage](#) to review.

### **Leave policy for employees affected by COVID-19 layoffs updated**

Iowa Workforce Development has implemented updates to its leave policy for filing unemployment insurance benefits following the enactment of the CARES Act. Effective immediately, employees who are or will be laid off, or cannot work for reasons related to COVID-19, will no longer be required to use all paid leave before being eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. This change is not retroactive and claims will not be backdated before the week of March 29, 2020, for new or existing claims by those who work for employers. The CARES Act benefit program also is expanding the group of people eligible for unemployment benefits to workers who have exhausted their benefits. Iowa Workforce Development will continue to share more information as guidance from the Department of Labor is received and will post on their website, [www.IowaWorkforceDevelopment.gov](http://www.IowaWorkforceDevelopment.gov).

### **Department of Labor offers more guidance on Families First**

The latest round of Families First [guidance](#) from the Department of Labor includes [questions and answers](#) addressing critical issues, such as the definition of a “health care provider” and whether public sector employees may take paid family and medical leave.

### **IDPH webinar set for tomorrow for COVID-19 health care providers**

A webinar for COVID-19 health care providers led by IDPH is scheduled 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 31. Attendees will hear about crisis standards of care from Dr. Caitlyn Pedati and Dr. David Stilley as well as hydroxychloroquine from Dr. Ed Bottei from the Iowa Poison Control Center. Click [here](#) to register.

### **Next CEO update call**

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

### **Resource for boards grappling with the challenges of COVID-19 as a hospital trustee**

What are the critical issues for boards of trustees to consider and what information does the board absolutely need to know to prepare and respond to COVID-19? This [briefing from GovernWell](#) highlights these questions and areas for board consideration in a practical seven-point framework.

### **Recordings of IHA webinars made available**

If you could not participate in either of IHA's webinars Friday, you can click the following links to access the recordings:

"[Managing Communication and Employee Issues During a Pandemic](#)" and "[Revenue-cycle crisis management: COVID-19](#)". If you have technical issues or questions, contact [Joah Hogan](#) at IHA.

### **Free COVID-19 course for all state hospital association membership**

IHA partner careLearning has developed a free COVID-19 training course to help educate staff during this pandemic. This course is available to all facilities, not just careLearning users. To access this course, go to <http://client.carelearning.com/carelearnings-covid-19-course-access/>. If you have any issues with accessing the course, email careLearning at [support@carelearning.com](mailto:support@carelearning.com).

### **IHA COVID-19 resource webpage**

Visit IHA's [coronavirus resource page](#) for current information about COVID-19.

### **Previous IHA Updates on COVID-19**

[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](#)

[March 17 Update](#)



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