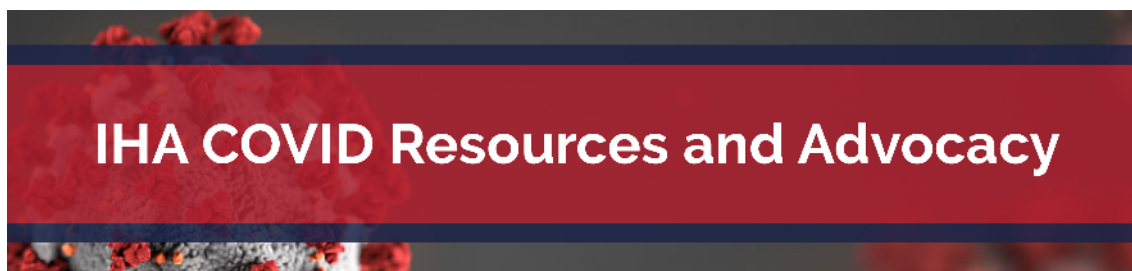


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Wednesday, June 23, 2021

IHA urges lawmakers to extend deadline on Provider Relief Funds

This week, IHA sent letters to each of Iowa's Members of Congress urging them to extend the deadline for providers to use their provider relief funds. This request was made after the Health and Human Services Administration released updated reporting guidance earlier this month extending the deadline to use some of the funds. The administration's updated guidance extends the deadline for funds received between July 1, 2020, and later but keeps in place the deadline of Wednesday, June 30, for funds received before June 30, 2020.

Providers can call the Health Resources and Services Administration customer service payment line at 866-569-3522, from 7 am-10 pm Monday-Friday with questions or concerns.

Iowa's Congressional delegation is reviewing the available options, and IHA will provide updates as they develop. Questions about the provider relief fund can be emailed to [Susan Horras](#) or [Erin Cubit](#) at IHA.

Hospitals concerned with OSHA's emergency temporary standards

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) published their updated emergency temporary standards this week in the Federal Register, scheduling the standards to become effective Tuesday, July 6. Though several of the standards' provisions are actions hospitals are already doing, some of them are new. IHA is working with AHA to submit comments to OSHA about areas of concern, including the unlimited unpaid leave and mask-use requirements. IHA also is hosting a webinar reviewing rules, requirements and recommendations from the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, CMS, OSHA and the CDC. Information about the webinar is included in the Educational Opportunities of this newsletter.

Test Iowa program to end July 16

Test Iowa, the state's large-scale, free COVID-19 testing program that launched in April 2020, will end Friday, July 16. Staggered closings of the five state-operated drive-thru locations will occur when testing ends at 4 p.m. on:

- Wednesday, June 23, Council Bluffs.
- Thursday, June 24, Cedar Rapids.
- Friday, June 25, Waterloo.
- Friday, July 16, Des Moines.

- Friday, July 16, Davenport.

Clinic closures will be determined by provider but will occur no later than July 16. Closing dates will be posted at coronavirus.iowa.gov and testiowa.com.

Demand for testing is at its lowest levels in more than a year since vaccine is now widely available and virus activity has significantly decreased. But ensuring the availability of free COVID-19 tests for Iowans remains a priority. The Iowa Department of Public Health and the State Hygienic Lab will provide free at-home test kits to Iowans after the Test Iowa program closes. COVID-19 testing also will continue to be provided by health care providers, pharmacies and other retail testing sites statewide.

CMS reaffirms hospital survey approach

CMS [announced in a letter to AHA](#) that it will continue to remain flexible in its approach to surveys if a hospital experiences a COVID-19 surge. Hospitals in these circumstances should notify their survey agency as soon as possible, as the agency will coordinate with CMS to consider a short-term, hospital-specific survey suspension. This communication should occur before the survey begins: When surveyors are at a hospital, they will not be recalled.

In evaluating whether to temporarily suspend survey activities, CMS will consider whether the hospital has notified the appropriate state public health agency and activated its emergency preparedness plan as well as the proportion of hospital staff and resources dedicated to managing COVID-19 patients.

Campaign, TV event celebrate nursing's heroic efforts during the pandemic

The American Nurses Association, Al Roker Entertainment and HealthCom Media, publisher of American Nurse Journal, have joined forces to produce a multichannel campaign to celebrate the heroic work of nurses and the positive impact they have on our nation in this time of crisis — and beyond. The [American Nurse Heroes campaign](#) will present true stories of nurses on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic in the journal, online and through a network television event, premiering Thursday, June 24, on the Discovery Life channel.

Educational opportunities

- [COVID-19 Screening and Precaution Requirements in Health Care](#), 10:30 am-Noon Wednesday, July 7. This webinar will review Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals expectations, applicable CMS rules and regulations, OSHA requirements and CDC guidance.
- [The Emotional Impact of COVID-19: Leading Your Team to an Emotionally Healthy Workplace](#), Thursday, July 15. This presentation will focus on how to shift to leadership behaviors and practices that help increase organizational and individual resilience and emotional sustainability and move to deeper capacity, connection and organizational strength.
- [A Path Forward: Thriving in Rural Health Care after COVID-19](#), Thursday, Aug. 19. This webinar will explore true stories of the amazing resiliency of rural communities amid the formidable challenges of a pandemic.



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