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Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021

Today's headlines:

- [Medicare sequester, PAYGO cuts averted temporarily](#)
- [State to contract 100 nurses and respiratory therapists](#)
- [New emergency proclamation maintains recent COVID-19 waivers, protocols, reinstates retirement allowance provision](#)
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Medicare sequester, PAYGO cuts averted temporarily

The U.S. Senate voted Thursday to approve House Amendment [S.610, the Protecting Medicare and American Farmers From Sequester Cuts Act](#). The amendment temporarily averts cuts to Medicare and delays cuts to the Pay-As-You-Go Act. The U.S. House of Representatives passed the same amendment Tuesday.

The legislation will:

- Extend the 2% Medicare sequester moratorium until March 31, 2022.
- Delay the 4% cuts to Medicare from the statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act until calendar year 2023.
- Adjust the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule conversion factor by 3% in calendar year 2022.
- Delay Protecting Access to Medicare Act-related cuts to clinical laboratory services and the next round of private payer data reporting by a year.
- Delay the implementation of the Medicare Radiation Oncology Model until 2023.

Protecting Medicare is a priority for IHA and IHA's advocacy team will continue the work on this important issue. [IHA thanks Rep. Cindy Axne](#) for her support of this important legislation.

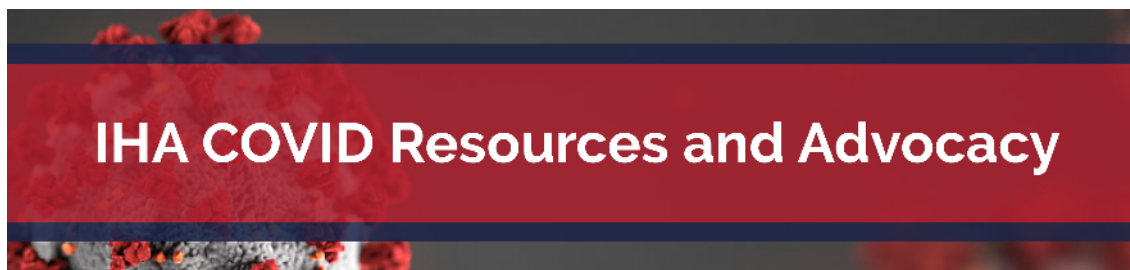
State to contract 100 nurses and respiratory therapists

The state of Iowa will use federal funds from appropriate allowable funding sources to contract with 100 health care staff. Contracted nurses and respiratory therapists will support 17 Iowa facilities that provide 1, 2 and 3 trauma level care.

The supplemental staff at these facilities will help increase capacity, reduce emergency department wait times, facilitate additional transfers of critically ill patients and reduce strain at lower-level trauma care facilities. This will allow facility staff to focus on care for patients who are less critically ill.

Workforce is a key issue for IHA's advocacy team in 2022. IHA has been in talks with legislators and the governor's office about ways to address this multifaceted issue. IHA commends the state for taking proactive steps to help alleviate the stress on Iowa's hospitals and health care professionals.

Click [HERE](#) for a list of Iowa's trauma care facilities.



New emergency proclamation maintains recent COVID-19 waivers, protocols, reinstates retirement allowance provision

Yesterday, Gov. Kim Reynolds issued a new disaster emergency proclamation that maintains the most-recent waivers and emergency protocols for the COVID-19 pandemic.

IHA advocated for a waiver to be re-added suspending the requirement for the repayment or reduction of a public employee's IPERS benefit if the employee is reemployed or returns to employment during the disaster emergency and is pleased that it was included in the current proclamation. IHA wants to thank Gov. Reynolds for the support that will help workforce needs in public hospitals statewide.

The full proclamation can be found [HERE](#).

Other key provisions remaining in the proclamation under Health Care System Regulatory Relief concern:

- Certificate of need and exceeding bed capacity.
- Consistency between state law and federal waivers.
- Licensure for physicians and medical professionals licensed outside of Iowa.
- Requirement for hospitals to complete a criminal background check before employing someone, allowing individuals to still begin working at a hospital while the background check is being processed.
- Tuberculosis screenings.

Gov. Reynolds continued to extend language waiving administrative rule or law that creates inconsistency with federal law. This means federal waivers will still be honored. A list of federal waivers can be found [HERE](#).

The existing provisions will be maintained until Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022, at which time Gov. Reynolds will determine what portions of the proclamation should be extended.

Contact [Erin Cubit](#) at IHA with questions.

Pfizer not included in Dec. 13 COVID-19 allocation survey

The Iowa Department of Public Health's Dec. 13 allocation vaccine survey will not include the Pfizer adolescent and adult vaccine. The exclusion of the Pfizer vaccine is to ensure existing inventory in the state is used as Pfizer transitions to the Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine.

IDPH also announced the Food and Drug Administration authorized a single-use booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to people 16 and 17 years old at least six months after completion of their primary vaccination. This group should only receive the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or Comirnaty as their booster dose.

More information can be found in IDPH's [updated COVID-19 vaccine information brief](#). The document also is posted to the HAN*3 COVID-19 vaccine folder. Call the Immunization Program with questions at 800-831-6293, ext. 1.

IHA advocacy team weekly round up

This week, the IHA advocacy team worked with member hospitals to reach out to Iowa's federal delegation ahead of votes in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate on House Amendment, [S.610, the Protecting Medicare and American Farmers From Sequester Cuts Act](#). The amendment eventually passed both chambers and is now moving to President Joe Biden.

Additional meetings this week included:

- A meeting on Tuesday with Rep. Ann Meyer (R-Fort Dodge) to discuss IHA's [2022 legislative priorities](#), with a focus on rural emergency hospital licensure.
- A meeting Tuesday with a coalition of Iowa's Mental Health and Disability Services Regions, the Department of Human Services and other stakeholders to discuss messaging and strategy for psychiatric intensive care in 2022.
- A meeting Wednesday with the Health Insurance Mandate Review committee to discuss a future report of its findings.
- A meeting Wednesday with the Iowa Dental Association to discuss legislative priorities with possible alignment.

2022 renewals open for personal membership groups

Personal membership group members wanting to maintain their status for 2022 can now renew. Membership fees are included in hospital dues for those who work at an Iowa hospital, however confirmation is still needed by those who want to continue membership.

To confirm membership, click [HERE](#).

IHA's personal membership groups offer customized learning and networking opportunities for nearly a dozen different hospital professionals. Anyone interested in learning more can find details [HERE](#).

Email [Allison Martin](#) at IHA for help.

Submit vaccine mandate webinar questions by Tuesday, Dec. 14

Remember to submit questions for attorney Denise Hill to answer by Tuesday, Dec. 14 for the upcoming [Navigating the Legal Uncertainty of COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

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14, for the upcoming [Navigating the Legal Uncertainty of COVID-19 Vaccine
Mandates in the Health Care Workplace](#). The webinar is scheduled from 2-3 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 15.

The webinar will give IHA members the opportunity to clarify their responsibilities considering the recent federal vaccine mandates and court injunctions.

Email [Joah Hogan](#) at IHA with your questions for Hill.

Register for ligature risks and suicide prevention webinar

Registration is open for the Update on Ligature Risks and Suicide Prevention webinar scheduled from 10 a.m.-noon Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022. The webinar will cover hospitals' responsibility to provide care and safety to psychiatric patients at risk of harm to themselves or others.

The webinar is part of IHA's 2022 regulatory webinar series.

Participants will discuss:

- Guidance surveyors use in determining compliance with providing care in safe environments.
- Immediate jeopardy and conditions-of-participation-level deficiencies for patient safety.
- Implications of a condition-level deficiency.
- Issues regarding personal belongings.
- Physical environment issues.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' adoption of The Joint Commission Suicide Panel recommendations of comprehensive ligature risk interpretative guidelines.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' requirements for providing care in safe environments for all patients, specifically those who are suicidal or in need of behavioral health services.
- What an immediate-jeopardy citations means to the hospital.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Click [HERE](#) to register.

NewsStand

Iowa news

- [COVID-19 patient count in Iowa hospitals hits another 2021 record](#)
- ['Staffing crisis' grips Iowa hospitals as COVID-19 cases climb](#)
- [U.S. News & World Report names MercyOne Waterloo Medical Center a Best Hospital for Maternity](#)

National news

- [Federal regulators clear Pfizer-BioNTech boosters for 16- and 17-year-olds](#)
- [A rural Georgia community reels after hospital closes](#)
- [Omicron's spread and U.S. strategy](#)

Click [HERE](#) to read daily NewsStand postings.

Upcoming events

- [Post-pandemic Priorities for Rural Health Systems](#): Tuesday, Dec. 14
 - [Navigating the Legal Uncertainty of COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates in the Health Care Workplace](#): Wednesday, Dec. 15
 - [CMS Survey Readiness](#): Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022
 - [Nurse Manager Leadership Workshop](#): Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022 - Tuesday, March 15, 2022
 - [Abuse, Restraints and Seclusion Regulations](#): Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022
 - [Update on Ligature Risks and Suicide Prevention](#): Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022
 - [Advanced Leadership Academy](#): Wednesday, March 2, 2022 - Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2022
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Hospital jobs site connects hospitals with qualified candidates

Are you looking for qualified health care professionals for your Iowa hospital? HospitalCareers.com can help. This website connects thousands of nurses, providers and other hospital jobseekers with Iowa hospitals each year and is a main resource for jobseekers looking for work in health care.



Your resource for Iowa hospital and health system jobs.

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