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Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021

Today's headlines:

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- [Republican Dave Rowley wins special election for Iowa Senate seat](#)
- [HHS starts distributing phase 4 provider relief fund payments](#)
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Appeals court denies restoring Biden's vaccine mandate for health care workers

On Monday, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals denied President Joe Biden's request to lift a [lower court's injunction](#) that blocked Biden's Nov. 4 [health care staff vaccination mandate](#) that requires health care workers in facilities that participate in Medicare and Medicaid to be vaccinated. The lower court's injunction only applied to 10 states, including Iowa.

The next step is for the Biden Administration to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

IHA will continue to monitor the issue and provide updates.

Republican Dave Rowley wins special election for Iowa Senate seat

Spirit Lake Republican Dave Rowley won a special election for a northwest Iowa Senate seat.

Rowley received 75.6% of the vote, defeating Democrat Mark Lemke for Senate District 1. Rowley will take over the seat from Republican Zach Whiting. Whiting resigned in late October to take a job with the Texas Public Policy Foundation. Whiting completed three of four years in his term.

Rowley will service the remainder of the term for Senate District 1, which includes Clay, Dickinson, Lyon, Osceola and Palo Alto counties. In 2022, he will need to run for reelection in the redrawn Senate District 5. The newly drawn Senate District 5 includes part of Clay County and all of Dickinson, Emmet, Kossuth, Palo Alto and Winnebago counties.

Republicans control the Iowa Senate 32-18. Rowley will take his oath of office in

January at the start of the legislative session.

HHS starts distributing phase 4 provider relief fund payments

The Department of Health and Human Services announced Tuesday it will distribute \$9 billion of the \$17 billion in provider relief fund phase 4 payments. The payments will be distributed to providers who experienced revenue losses and expenses concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

HHS said more than 69,000 providers will receive payments beginning today. The average payments are:

- \$58,000 for small providers.
- \$289,000 for medium providers.
- \$1.7 million for large providers.

HHS said it reviewed 75% of phase 4 funding applications and is still reviewing the remaining 25% of applications. The remaining phase 4 payments will be made in 2022.

Click [HERE](#) to read the announcement.

EMS training expansion effective January 2022

A rule expanding the types of eligible entities allowed to provide emergency medical services training programs was finalized in Wednesday's Iowa Administrative Bulletin.

Starting Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022, medical care ambulance services and non-transport services that received authorization from the Iowa Department of Public Health can provide this training. The expanded training will open more opportunities for people interested in emergency medical services to receive their certification.

IHA supported and advocated for easing the process to declare emergency medical services an essential service. The language helped expand training programs and was included in legislation on the last day of the 2021 legislative session. IHA is pleased this rule was finalized because it will help workforce issues.

CMS releases memo about maternal best practices

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services released a memo to state survey agencies that encourage hospitals to:

- Incorporate maternal safety bundles.
- Implement evidence-based best practices for managing obstetric emergencies and addressing disparities.
- Review their maternal health policies and procedures.

Starting with discharges on Oct. 1, 2021, the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program asks hospitals to attest to whether they participate in a statewide and/or national maternal safety quality collaborative and implemented patient safety practices or bundles to improve maternal outcomes.

Click [HERE](#) to read the memo.

Revenue estimating conference reports positive growth

Iowa's Revenue Estimating Conference held its last meeting for 2021 on Monday. The group reported signs of positive continuing growth in the state's economy.

The conference projects the current fiscal year will conclude with net receipts of more than \$9 billion, a growth of 3% compared to 2020. The group also estimated that net receipts for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, will grow by 1.7% or \$9.21 billion.

Legislators will use this data to inform their budget decisions when they return to the Statehouse next month. The Revenue Estimating Conference will meet again in March 2022.

Ransom attack, Apache vulnerabilities affecting hospitals and health systems

A ransomware attack affected Ultimate Kronos Group Services that hospitals and other organizations use to manage employees and payrolls. The attack affects the Kronos Private Cloud that includes:

- Banking Scheduling Solutions.
- Healthcare Extensions.
- UKG TeleStaff.
- UKG Workforce Central.

[UKG said](#) affected organizations have been contacted. It may take several weeks before services are fully restored and recommended affected organizations use alternative protocols.

Hospitals are also vulnerable because of Java-based logging utility, Apache Log4j. It's broadly used in a variety of consumer and enterprise services, websites, applications and operational technology products to log security and performance information. Hospitals and health systems are encouraged to check the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency [webpage](#) and [GitHub](#) repository for the latest public information and vendor-supplied advisories about critical remote code execution vulnerability affecting Apache Log4J software.

IHA continues tradition of Christmas gift-giving

IHA delivered Christmas gifts to Carver Elementary School in Des Moines Tuesday morning. The gifts will be given to four families in need. Gifts also fulfilled teachers' supply wish lists.

IHA has participated in the Christmas gift drive for several decades.

IHA holds donation drives throughout the year to help Iowa families and teachers. This year, IHA donated \$1,030 to purchase school supplies and 15 bags of donated supplies to Carver Elementary for the start of school. IHA also donated 127 pounds of food and \$830 to the Food Bank of Iowa for a Thanksgiving food drive.





Reyna Onnen, SUCCESS case manager at Carver Elementary School Des Moines, center, accepts Christmas presents for four families from IHA staff Sarah Coddington, left, and Kathy Trytten.

IHERF scholarship application open

The application portal for the 2022 Iowa Hospital Education and Research Foundation (IHERF) Scholarship is open. IHERF, a subsidiary of IHA, will award 60 health care scholarships of up to \$7,000 (\$3,500 per year for up to two years) and \$1,000 specific to emergency medical technology/technician certification programs.

Scholarship applicants must be enrolled in an accredited program and be within two years of completing their professional education. IHERF will accept scholarship applications through Thursday, March 31, 2022.

Applicants must submit their information on [IHERF's scholarship website](#). The site will confirm scholarship eligibility before the application process begins.

Email [Cindy Schultz](#) at IHA with questions.

NewsStand

Iowa news

- [UnityPoint explores selling three hospitals to Carle Health](#)
- [A year after the first COVID-19 shot, nearly 1.8M Iowans are fully vaccinated](#)
- [2 communities share the experience of closing their birthing units](#)

National news

- [Omicron is fastest spreading COVID-19 strain](#)
- [Supreme Court allows vaccine mandate for NY health care workers](#)
- [Current COVID-19 boosters are enough to fight the omicron variant](#)

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

Upcoming events

- [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
- [Understanding Hospital Board and Medical Staff Responsibilities Under Medicare COPs](#): Tuesday, April 12, 2022

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.



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