



# IROQUOIS

Healthcare Association

**To:** IHA Members

**From:** Gary J. Fitzgerald, *President & CEO*

**Date:** March 17, 2020

**RE:** COVID-19 Member Update

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## FEDERAL COVID-19 UPDATE:

This week, Governor Cuomo has been urging the Trump administration to deploy the Army Corps of Engineers to help expand hospital capacity ahead of what's expected to be an influx of patients. He also stated that FEMA should be involved.

In a Pentagon briefing Monday, when asked about the activating the Army Corps of Engineers, the Pentagon stated they had not received any formal request for that, but should they receive one, they would review and discuss with the White House.

Governor Cuomo has stated that New York has about 3,000 intensive care unit beds and 50,000 hospital beds. He believes that the hospitals could be overwhelmed by the wave of people needing care in the coming weeks during the outbreak.

President Donald Trump has responded to Governor Cuomo, stating that Cuomo should "do more" to handle the situation. In a conference call, Trump said ventilators are being sought by the federal government, but states should also pursue the equipment for ICU beds as well.

Governor Cuomo has pointed out that there is a "global run" on ventilators that make them both expensive and difficult to acquire in the first place.

The Senate today released more details on Senator Schumer's \$750 billion plan to surge the federal response to the coronavirus which includes \$400 billion in emergency appropriations, in addition to \$350 billion in benefit increases and changes to federal safety net programs.

Funding would be spent on boosting medical care and equipment, covering child care costs amid school closures, awarding small business loans, federal housing help, broadband connectivity, public transportation relief and food assistance for seniors and students out of school.

Schumer stated he wants to increase unemployment, Medicaid and food stamp benefits, in addition to canceling monthly student loan payments and deferring federally backed mortgage payments for six months.

The Trump administration is looking at a total package of \$850 billion, including more than \$50 billion for the airline industry, \$250 billion for supporting small businesses and \$500 billion to temporarily nix the payroll tax.

Also, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Tuesday that the administration is "looking at sending checks to Americans immediately." But the secretary did not detail how much people could expect to receive or how wealthier individuals might be excluded.

## CMS COVID-19 UPDATE:

The President's declaration of a national emergency on March 13 and the HHS Secretary's declaration of a public health emergency on January 31 provide the Secretary authority to waive certain Medicare, Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance

Program (CHIP) program requirements and conditions of participation under Section 1135 of the Social Security Act.

CMS has issued blanket waivers which are outlined in the [Emergency Declaration Health Care Providers Fact Sheet](#). Additional information is available on the CMS COVID-19 response [webpage](#).

These waivers are effective immediately and do not require additional approvals with the exception of licensed providers rendering services outside of their state of enrollment, which requires state approval.

CMS indicates that it will be providing additional flexibility for telehealth and is reviewing the waiver or modification of regulations relating to ventilators to help hospitals manage staffing and patient care.

In a [letter](#) sent yesterday to the HHS Secretary, AHA requested additional waiver actions including relief from the CAH 96-hour condition of payment in addition to the 96-hour average length of stay relief included in the initial blanket waivers. Additional information is available in an [AHA Advisory](#) issues yesterday

For additional information on requesting and operating under emergency waivers, please reference the following IHA documents:

- [Temporary Suspension and Modification of Statutes and Regulations During Emergencies: A Guide for Healthcare Providers](#)
  - This document identifies statutes and regulations that are likely to impede care during an emergency. In addition to listing potential statutory and regulatory barriers, the guide provides an overview of legal authorities, a description of the process for requesting waivers, and contact information.
- [CMS Emergency Preparedness Conditions of Participation CMS 1135 Waiver and Alternate Care Site Requirements: Recommendations for Compliance](#)
  - This document includes a summary of CMS requirements relating to 1135 waivers and alternate care sites, along with recommendations for compliance, guidance on requesting and operating under an 1135 waiver, sample policies and procedures, and applicable references.

## STATE COVID-19 & BUDGET UPDATE:

Governor Cuomo today announced a three-way agreement on paid sick leave. The bill includes requirements for sick leave and the provision of certain employee benefits when the employee is subject to a mandatory or precautionary order or quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19. In addition, it provides for permanent paid sick leave benefits, which differ from the COVID-19 requirements, which would take effect in 180 days.

IHA has been informed that state budget negotiations are continuing all week, with the goal of wrapping up by Friday, March 20. Noteworthy: A spokesman for the Division of the Budget stated late Tuesday afternoon that the MRT II was proceeding as planned.

At a press conference this morning, Governor Cuomo and his staff made it clear that an April 1 budget is entirely possible, as long as it contains the flexibility to make changes, hold payments, move payments and modulate as needed. It is our understanding the Legislature will resume their legislative session tomorrow.

Governor Cuomo also indicated that the Budget Director has been briefed by the State Comptroller regarding his review of available revenues for budgeting purposes, since the occurrence of COVID-19. The Comptroller has determined that the revenue estimates are approximately \$4-\$7 billion higher than originally determined.

Based on this information, it seems likely that a final state budget could include some additional superpowers and/or ability for the Governor to be able to accommodate for future calibration based on incoming state revenues, or the lack thereof.

### **New York's "Tri-State" Approach:**

- Yesterday the Executive took significant containment measures in conjunction with New Jersey and Connecticut governments. The tri-state strategy has provided uniformity per the Governor.
- Restaurants, bars, gyms will remain closed, with various rules relaxed during this time. Schools remain closed for 2 weeks while daycares remain open.
- The Governor emphasized the these rules are to be implemented statewide and

are made in the 'best interest of the state'. The Governor admitted that there is a significant impact on the business community, and that government will deal with the issues, to "manage the consequences" after the immediate public health crisis is under control.

- The state has shifted emphasis to the healthcare system as a priority, with the continued effort in "flattening the curve".
- 10,049 individuals have been tested to date, 1374 testing positive statewide, with 12 deaths.
- Experts working with the NYS Department of Health indicated today that they expect the peak to be around 45 days, and approximately 55,000-110,000 beds will be needed to treat those impacted.

Drive through testing is and will be established in New Rochelle, Nassau, Suffolk, Staten Island and Rockland counties. The plan is to:

- Continue to 'reduce density' – more closings may occur to eliminate interaction between people. However, there are no new rules announced today.
- Increase capacity of hospitals – identify surge capacity by allowing hospitals to expand their capacity by relaxing DOH rules

Mike Dowling, CEO of Northwell and Ken Raske from GNYHA have been named by the Governor to lead a Hospital Surge Council, to determine the maximum capacity of facilities, and their equipment and staff needs. The first meeting was Tuesday afternoon.

Lastly, the Governor indicated in his morning call with President Trump that there was a willingness to work together and agreed that NYS cannot handle this crisis alone without the resources of the Federal government. The Governor indicated the President was sincere in his remarks, particularly assisting with hospital capacity issues.

## TELEHEALTH:

Click here to access Adirondack Health Institute's (AHI) [Telehealth COVID-19 Resource Document](#) with information on multiple state waivers that have been released, Medicare waivers, commercial plan updates, telehealth software resources, and upcoming webinars or other agency resource guides related to this topic.

In addition to the resource document, we have also included the following:

- [DOH Telephonic Services Medicaid Update](#)
- [OMH Self Attestation Form and 2 Updates regarding Telemental Health and Telephonic Services](#)
- [OASAS Telepractice Waiver and Update](#)
- [COVID-19 Telehealth Fact Sheet from the Center for Connected Health Policy](#)
- [CMS Information on Medicare Advantage Plans and Telehealth](#)
- [CMS Fact Sheet – Coverage and Payment for COVID-19](#)

## CHILDCARE:

It is our understanding the Governor's office has directed HANYS and GNYHA to develop a statewide plan for childcare for the state's healthcare workers and first responders, utilizing SUNY and CUNY spaces. Many SUNY/CUNY campuses have child care centers already in place but since colleges campuses have many vacancies right now, the day cares are either not being used and/or have additional capacity.

## HERDS CALLS:

Starting today DOH will hold calls twice a day with all hospital CEOs and Hospital Emergency Response Data System reporters. Attendance is mandatory.

- **COVID-19 Patient and Bed Survey Call**
  - (844) 467-8050
  - Calls will be held at 7 a.m. and 2 p.m., one hour prior to the opening of the HERDS COVID-19 Patient and Bed Summary Survey, which opens each day at 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.
  - The purpose of these calls will be to brief hospital leadership and HERDS reporters on any issues DOH is having with data and survey completion from the previous reporting period and communicate any changes or

directions for the next reporting period. Questions will not be taken on the calls, but can be submitted to a mail log, with answers to be provided on subsequent calls.

## SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT:

### Premier Members

[Click here](#) to login to the Premier website to get the latest Supplier updates from Premier's Disaster Preparedness and Response Community.

### Non-Premier Members

Find information on Supplier updates below:

#### B. Braun [COVID-19 Update](#)

- B. Braun has implemented a protective allocation at the distributor level on certain fluid and antibiotic product codes at 105% of historical usage.
- All customers should continue to place orders according to their normal forecast, with the exception of an identified immediate need for additional product.
- B. Braun has established an executive-level team and cross functional task force to monitor PPE allocation, continuity plans for B. Braun manufacturing locations, PPE supplies used in their manufacturing and staffing and preventative practices.

**Baxter** [Customer Letter](#) states that COVID-19 has not impacted their product availability in the US.

**Cardinal Health's** [Med/Surg PPE Inventory Table](#) providing options for alternate supplier products.

**Cardinal's Pharmaceutical Distribution** [COVID-19 FAQs](#) where Cardinal outlines their contingency plan specific to COVID-19 and answers questions.

**Diversey** is opening a new line this week to give an extra boost in inventory and is running the manufacturing lines for all AHP wipes, 24 hours per day. They are still fulfilling orders on time, though there is definitely panic in the healthcare market that is making facilities order significantly more robust than normal. That being said, inventory levels are currently safe, especially on Oxivir 1 and refills, and they have many different pack sizes in the event they become low on any particular SKU.

**Staples** can be a source for masks, sanitizing products, and PPE products. Current Customers can contact your Staples representative. Customers not currently doing business with Staples; send an email to [HealthCareRequests@Staples.com](mailto:HealthCareRequests@Staples.com).

## NEW DOH & CDC COVID-19 GUIDANCE:

Below are links to the most recent CDC and NYSDOH guidance on infection prevention and control, patient evaluation and testing and other issues.

### Surge

- [NYSDOH DAL | Guidance on Seeking Emergency Approvals](#) Issued 3/16

### Healthcare Personnel

- [NYSDOH Health Advisory | Protocols for Personnel to Return to Work Following COVID-19 Exposure](#) Issued 3/16

### Evaluation & Testing

- [NYSDOH COVID-19 Critical Specimen Transport Protocol](#) Updated 3/16
- [NYSDOH Interim Guidance: Protocol for COVID-19 Testing Applicable to All Health Care Providers and Local Health Departments \(LHD\)](#) Issued 3/6
- [CDC | Evaluating and Testing Persons for COVID-19](#) Updated 3/9
- [CDC | Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens for COVID-19](#) Updated 3/9
- [CDC | Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings](#) Updated 3/10

### Patient Management

- [CDC | Disposition of Non-Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19](#) Updated 3/16
- [NYSDOH | Interim Guidance for Home Care Services](#) Issued 3/16
- [NYSDOH | Guidance on the Contacts of a Close or Proximate Contact of a Confirmed or Suspected Case of COVID-19](#) Issued 3/15

#### LTCFs

- [NYSDOH Health Advisory | COVID-19 Cases in Nursing Homes and Adult Care Facilities](#) Issued 3/13
- [CDC | Updated Nursing Home Guidance Including Visitor Limitations](#) Updated 3/13
- [CDC | Guidance for Long-term Care Facilities](#) Updated 3/13

## IHA MEMBERS ON COVID-19:

Here is a compilation of some of the items we've heard from IHA members this week:

- Upstate University Hospital and Crouse Health are [cancelling elective surgeries](#) to free up supplies for coronavirus
- Some hospitals screening all employees upon entering
- Visitation policies narrowed to one or none
- Accounting, patient finance, medical records are working from home
- Payroll is expected to work from home and be present only on days necessary, which should be three days every 14-day cycle
- Staff members are required to remain on the floor of their assignment. Only staff, such as security, go from floor to floor
- Makeshift cafeteria has been established on the main floor, so the main floor and basement staff have separate cafeterias
- All meals are no cost to employees till further notice
- All entrances will have handwashing stations
- Entry will be prohibited without washing hands. Washing stations will be supplied by running water from plumbing
- Reported challenges purchasing touchless faucets

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Please know that IHA continues to be in contact with our allied associations, DOH, the Governor's office and state lawmakers to address ongoing hospital concerns. We have created a dedicated email address - [COVID@iroquois.org](mailto:COVID@iroquois.org) - for you to **share REQUESTS, IDEAS, and CONCERNS that we will communicate directly to the state.**

[EMAIL US](#)

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