



# IROQUOIS

Healthcare Association

**To:** IHA Members

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

**Date:** March 27, 2020

**RE:** COVID-19 Member Update: Staffing & Workforce, New Guidance and Federal Update

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IHA continues to be in contact with our allied associations, DOH, the Governor's office and state lawmakers to address ongoing hospital concerns related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. 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 state and federal government.**

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## FEDERAL COVID-19 UPDATE:

After days of contentious negotiation, the US Senate voted on a \$2 trillion COVID19 [stimulus package](#) designed to provide economic recovery and aid to Americans in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Key provisions are highlighted below:

- Includes \$100B in hospital funding to be used for COVID-19-related expenses and lost revenue
- Eliminates \$4B in Medicaid DSH cuts for NY's hospitals and health systems through FFY2020 and reduces the cut for FFY2021 from \$8B to \$4B beginning Dec. 1, 2020, alleviating \$1.3B in Medicaid DSH cuts through 2025
- Includes small business loans for hospitals with less than 500 employees
- Enables hospitals to request up to a 6-month Medicare advance payment
- Relaxes several requirements for states to utilize the enhanced FMAP funding previously signed into law

The House is expected to pass the bill by voice vote today.

Governor Cuomo has estimated that New York State will lose \$10-\$15 billion in revenue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The state will receive approximately \$5 billion as part of the \$2 trillion federal stimulus, earmarked only for coronavirus response, and not enough to fill New York's revenue shortfall.

The USNS Comfort, a Navy hospital ship, is expected to dock at New York's harbor on April 3 providing an additional 750 beds to address any overflow of patients.

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## STATE COVID-19 UPDATE:

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the state continues to rise, for a total of 37,258. Subsequently, so are related hospitalizations and deaths.

Governor Cuomo has indicated that as the health crisis enters a progressively dire state, he is desperately searching for needed ventilators and has publicly condoned ventilator splitting, which allows two individuals to receive ventilator support from one machine.

The state is scouting for additional sites downstate to set up temporary hospitals like the one at Jacob Javits Convention Center in Manhattan, which the Army Corps of Engineers is converting into a health care facility and should be functional by Monday.

Governor Cuomo said he hopes to set up these facilities for non-COVID-19 overflow

patients in Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester and Rockland counties, as well as in each of NYC's five boroughs.

Temporary hospitals are also being set up at Stony Brook University, SUNY Old Westbury and Westchester County Center to serve as alternate sites to the regular health care system.

52,000 medical professionals and 8,600 mental health professionals have volunteered to address the COVID-19 surge anticipated to hit the state in the coming weeks.

NYSDOH has extended the date for hospitals to submit Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Reports. The new due date for this report will be announced after the COVID-19 pandemic has begun to resolve.

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## STATE BUDGET UPDATE:

Due to the lack of aid offered to New York in the federal stimulus package, Governor Cuomo indicated in press briefings this week that he plans on reducing the size of the state budget, initially proposed in January, and would seek to gain authority to make spending adjustments – perhaps quarterly – as New York continues to confront the coronavirus pandemic. His comments indicated he would have the sole authority to make those decisions, and would not require the legislative approval.

Despite growing uncertainty, a balanced budget is expected to pass by the state's deadline of April 1. It is unclear at this time whether state lawmakers will return post-budget for a legislative session. There are ongoing budget negotiations taking place via conference call, as well as efforts underway to explore the Assembly and Senate voting remotely.

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## CMS COVID-19 UPDATE:

- [CMS Approves Some of New York's 1135 Waiver Requests](#) – NYS submitted a [request](#) to CMS seeking relief from requirements relating to provider enrollment and screening, hospital administrative and operational issues, HIPAA, EMTALA, telehealth and other issues. CMS responded on March 26th, agreeing to waive provider enrollment and screening requirements, provide flexibility in state fair hearings and appeals, and allow facilities to be fully reimbursed for services provided in unlicensed, alternate settings. CMS indicated that some of the state's requests were addressed in the [blanket waivers](#) issued by CMS on March 13th, and that others would require further review.
- [Medicare Provider Enrollment Relief FAQs](#) - 3/22
- [CMS Grants Exceptions for Quality Measure Reporting](#) - 3/22
  - Also see [AHA Advisory](#)

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## FEMA FUNDING ASSISTANCE:

NYS DHSES will be holding briefings via WebEx to discuss the FEMA Public Assistance funding that may be available to hospitals and other healthcare facilities and providers under the COVID-19 major disaster declaration (DR-4480). See the [briefing schedule](#) for details of the sessions being held in your region on **March 30, March 31, or April 1**.

For additional information about the FEMA Public Assistance process:

- [NYS DHSES Disaster Declarations](#)
- [American Hospital Association \(AHA\)](#)
- [FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide](#) and [fact sheet](#)

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## TELEHEALTH:

New York has requested additional flexibilities for the use of telehealth in innovative and clinically meaningful ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. These additional flexibilities

include:

- Allowing telephonic, synchronous and asynchronous telehealth modalities for new and established patients; and
- Waiving the requirement that a provider must have provided service to the patient within the previous three years, so that telehealth codes can be billed for first-time patients.

## STAFFING/WORKFORCE:

Given the unique workforce demands faced by upstate New York hospitals and health systems at this time, IHA will be hosting a conference call today **Friday, March 27 at 1:00pm** related to the impact of COVID-19 on hospital workforce. The call will address key issues including:

- Staffing shortages & demands related to COVID-19
- Managing employee fear & anxiety
- Workforce impacts of current & projected hospital census
- Staffing plans related to the [Governor's directive](#) to increase bed capacity by 50%
- Balancing employment policies with employee concerns (i.e., pay & benefits, time off policies, FMLA)
- Other issues
- Future HR calls & communications

Dial-in Number: **(866) 503-4605** / Conference Code: **5183834422**

The qualitative information shared with IHA will be communicated directly to the Governor's office and Department of Health as the state continues to evaluate incoming hospital staffing and workforce data related to COVID-19.

Additionally, NYS has established a COVID-19 Emotional Support Helpline: 1-844-863-9314 (8am-10pm, 7 days a week) and the [Crisis Text Line](#): Text GOT5 to 741741

### [OMH Guidance for Managing Stress and Anxiety During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

The Medical Society of the State of New York (MSSNY) will be hosting a [webinar](#) on April 1st on the Psychosocial Dimensions of Infectious Disease Outbreaks at 7:30am.

## PPE, SUPPLIES & OTHER EQUIPMENT:

### Process for Requesting State Resources

Hospitals in need of PPE and other supplies/equipment should follow the [process](#) outlined by the Commissioner of Health for requesting resources through the county and NYS Office of Emergency Management. NYSDOH has stressed the importance of making requests no later than 10 days before you expect those supplies to be exhausted. Hospitals are reporting, however, that supplies are taking up to several weeks to be delivered. If you are experiencing these types of delays, please contact us at [covid@iroquois.org](mailto:covid@iroquois.org).

### UISS/Premier Members

- [Click here](#) to logon the website to get the latest Supplier updates from Premier's Disaster Preparedness and Response Community.
- Premier Letter to Suppliers - On behalf of its members, Premier has asked its contracted suppliers for payment flexibility. Read [Premier's letter to its suppliers here](#).
- **Cardinal** - Cardinal has added thermometers to their [constrained products list](#). While they are not currently experiencing issues with traditional wound care nor surgeon gloves, they have placed this on protective allocation in anticipation of increased demand based on potential shortfalls from other suppliers.
- **COVID-19 Weekly Update Call** - Wednesdays @ 1-1:30pm EST. Premier hosts a weekly call so members can get the latest information and ask questions relating to COVID19. Review the slides from the March 25 call [here](#).

## UISS/Premier & Non-Premier Members

- **B. Braun** – B. Braun has implemented a protective allocation at the distributor level on certain fluid and antibiotic product codes at 105% of historical usage. See the full update [here](#) for more specific information.
  - 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.
  - B. Braun continuity plans - [Ensuring Supply Through Crisis](#)
- **Cardinal Lab Distribution** - Cardinal Health is unable to source incremental volume to support higher demand with existing customers, nor emerging demand from new customers. To maximize support to existing customers, Cardinal Health has placed [universal viral transport systems and swabs](#) on 100% fair share allocation. Fair share allocation is based upon ordering patterns pre-coronavirus outbreak.
- **Beltmann** - Beltmann can [assist](#) with transportation of medical supplies and equipment, hospital setup, furniture re-configuration to maintain social distancing and more.
- **Convatec** - At this stage, [Convatec](#) is confident they can continue to provide customers with the vital products they need.
- **3M** - Fraudulent and counterfeit activity has increased. Use [this document](#) to help determine the validity of the 3M product you are purchasing.
- **Baxter** - [Allocations](#) have been put on Large Volume Parenteral and Small Volume Parenteral IV solutions, MINI-Bag Plus container systems, IV premixes (liquid and frozen), nutrition, inhaled gases, continuous rena replacement therapy consumables and IV administration and extension sets.

## NEW COVID-19 GUIDANCE:

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

### Testing, Treatment & Hospital Response

- [CDC | Alternative Care Site Infection Prevention and Control Considerations](#) - New 3/25
- [CDC | Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens for COVID-19](#) - Updated 3/25
- [CDC| Comprehensive Hospital Preparedness Checklist for COVID-19](#) - Updated 3/25
- [CDC | Interim Guidance for Collection and Submission of Postmortem PUI Specimens](#) - Updated 3/25
- [CDC | Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings](#) - Updated 3/23
- [CDC | Information for Clinicians on Therapeutic Options for COVID-19 Patients](#) - New 3/21
- [NYSDOH | Updated Guidance Regarding Obstetrical and Pediatric Settings](#) - 3/21

### PPE & Supplies

- [CDC | Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Burn Rate Calculator](#) - New 3/25

- [FDA Authorizes Emergency Use Of Certain Ventilators and Respiratory Devices](#) - 3/24
- [FDA | Medical Glove Conservation Strategies: Letter to Health Care Providers](#) - 3/20
- [FDA | Temporary Policy for Preparation of Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer Products](#) - 3/20
- [Process for Decontamination and Reuse of N95s | Nebraska Medicine](#)
- [Guidance on Purposing Anesthesia Machines as ICU Ventilators](#)

## Non-Acute Care

- [CDC | Interim Guidance for Outpatient Hemodialysis Facilities](#) - New 3/24
- [NYSDOH Advisory | Hospital Discharges and Admissions to Nursing Homes](#) - 3/25
- [NYSDOH | Guidance on Skilled Nursing Facilities Use of Home Hemodialysis](#) - 3/21
- [NYSDOH | Guidance Regarding ACF Operations During COVID-19 Outbreak](#) - 3/22
- [NYSDOH | Guidance for Home Health Care Agencies and Hospice Providers](#) - 3/22
- [NYSDOH | Recommendations to Protect Nursing Home Residents' Physical, Mental and Emotional Health](#) - 3/20
- [NYSDOH | Guidance for Dental Health Care Settings in Response to COVID-19](#) - 3/22

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## HERDS SURVEYS/CALLS:

COVID-19 Patient and Bed Summary Surveys are currently being conducted once a day. **The survey opens at 12:00 noon and closes at 4:00 pm.**

DOH holds a **mandatory call once a day at 12:00 noon** to brief hospital leadership and data reporters on issues with data and survey completion and communicate any changes or directions for that day's survey. **(Call-in number: 844-467-8050)**. Questions may be submitted by email to [hospinfo@health.ny.gov](mailto:hospinfo@health.ny.gov). Surveys and calls will be held until further notice, including weekends.

Additional fields have been added to collect evening contact information for the person who will be available to answer questions about data after 5 pm each day. That person should also have electronic or print access to the survey data.

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**Let us know** what best practices and processes your hospital has implemented to combat coronavirus.

[VISIT US ONLINE](#)

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Iroquois Healthcare Association | (518) 383-5060 | [www.iroquois.org](http://www.iroquois.org)

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