



# IROQUOIS

Healthcare Association

**To:** IHA Members

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

**Date:** March 22, 2020

**RE:** COVID-19: Weekend Member 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:

Earlier this week, President Trump signed into law the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) (H.R. 6201), the second in federal COVID-19 response packages providing emergency paid sick leave and food aid for low-income individuals, as well as eliminating patient cost sharing for COVID-19 testing and related services.

The US Senate is currently moving forward with a \$1 trillion package designed to ease the economic burden of COVID-19. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says a vote could be expected as early as Monday.

The USNS Comfort, a Navy hospital ship with a dozen operating rooms and 1,000 beds is headed to New York harbor; however, the ship is not expected to reach New York for several more weeks.

## STATE COVID-19 UPDATE

On Friday, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo took the most drastic action taken by New York to date - issuing a stay-at-home order or New York State on PAUSE (Policies Assure Uniform Safety for Everyone). Under this order:

- 100% of the workforce must stay home beginning tonight at 8PM, excluding essential services.
- All non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason are temporarily banned.
- Department of Motor Vehicles offices are temporarily closed for in-office visits. Online transactions, including for license renewals, are still be available. License and permit expiration will be extended.
- Enacting Matilda's Law to protect New Yorkers age 70+ and those with compromised immune systems
  - Remain indoors
  - Can go outside for solitary exercise
  - Pre-screen all visitors by taking their temperature
  - Wear a mask in the company of others
  - Stay at least 6 feet from others
  - Do not take public transportation unless urgent and absolutely necessary
- All barbershops, hair salons, tattoo or piercing salons, nail salons, hair removal services and related personal care services are closed to the public effective yesterday.
- Casinos, gyms, theaters, retail shopping malls, amusement parks and bowling

alleys are closed until further notice. Bars and restaurants are closed, but takeout can be ordered during the period of closure.

- Testing is free for all eligible New Yorkers as ordered by a health care provider.

**Most notably, hospitals have been instructed to cancel all elective, non-critical surgeries by Wednesday, March 25 and have been mandated via DOH Emergency Order to increase hospital bed capacity by a minimum of 50% with a goal of 100%.** IHA has not yet seen language related to the order; however, we were made aware of a call with State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker on Friday, March 20 detailing this information. Submission of these surge plans - including bed capacity, ventilator capacity and staffing plans - must include written certification by the CEO and should be emailed to [covidhospitalsurge@health.ny.gov](mailto:covidhospitalsurge@health.ny.gov) no later than **Tuesday, March 24**. Questions on providing this information should be emailed directly to Dr. Zucker at [howard.zucker@health.ny.gov](mailto:howard.zucker@health.ny.gov).

In a press conference this morning, Governor Cuomo urged federal government to implement the Defense Production Act in order to yield more masks, ventilators, tests and other critical supplies. He also called on the federal government to prioritize sending stimulus funding to individuals, state and local governments and businesses.

The State has identified four initial sites for constructing temporary hospitals in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers - the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, SUNY Stony Brook, SUNY Old Westbury and the Westchester Convention Center. The Army Corps of Engineers is expected to immediately begin work to construct the temporary hospitals. Additionally, the Governor has called upon the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to erect four federal hospitals, each with 250-bed configurations, within the Jacob J. Javits Convention Center. These hospitals would be fully equipped and staffed by FEMA.

As of today, NYS has tested 61,401 individuals - the most in the nation - and has 15,168 positive cases. The hospitalization rate has decreased slightly to 13%.

## STATE BUDGET UPDATE

Simultaneous to the COVID-19 crisis, three-way State budget negotiations are occurring between legislative and Executive staff. As part of those efforts, the Medicaid Redesign II Team (MRT II) submitted its [final recommendations](#) to the Governor and State Legislature for consideration as part of a final State Budget.

MRT II recommendations included increasing and making permanent the across-the-board New Year's Eve cut to all Medicaid providers, and revising the Indigent Care Pool formula and allocation methodology. IHA has expressed [our opposition](#) to any and all cuts to hospitals.

At a press event this week, Governor Cuomo stated that a State budget could not be finalized unless the federal government revisits a provision that makes billions in federal aid contingent on states not changing their Medicaid programs. "We can't do a budget without changes to Medicaid," Cuomo said.

Without this change, the Governor would be unable to use the funding to help fill the Medicaid deficit, and therefore be forced to implement Medicaid cuts, presumably using the MRT recommendations as a guide. There is also discussion in Albany about a final State budget that would not implement cuts on April first, but would allow the Governor the ability to calibrate or make payment adjustments to the budget throughout the year.

## CMS COVID-19 UPDATE:

- [CMS Recommends Limiting Non-Essential Medical, Surgical, and Dental Procedures](#) - 3/18
- [CMS FAQs for State Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs](#) - 3/18

## TELEHEALTH:

The Adirondack Health Institute (AHI) Telehealth Team will be hosting a webinar on **Wednesday, March 25th from 1-2pm**, on telehealth updates in NYS related to COVID-19. This webinar is limited to 300 participants and will be recorded and disseminated to all participants within 24 hours after the session. If you are interested in participating, please register [HERE](#).

Below, please find updated DOH and CMS guidance related to telehealth services:

- [DOH Guidance Regarding Use of Telehealth including Telephonic Services During the COVID-19 State of Emergency](#) - 3/21
- [NYSDOH | Telehealth Guidance for NHTD/TBI 1915\(c\) Medicaid Services](#) - 3/20
- [NYSDOH | Telehealth Guidance for CFTSS Medicaid Services](#) - 3/19
- [NYSDOH | Telehealth Guidance for CBLTSS Medicaid Services](#) - 3/18
- [CMS Telehealth Coverage Expansion Fact Sheet](#) and [FAQs](#) - 3/17
- [CMS Releases Telehealth Toolkits](#)

## CHILDCARE:

The NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has outlined the following options for establishing and providing child care services for hospital employees:

- Hospitals can work with [child care resource and referral agencies](#) to find additional care for children in existing child care programs.
- Hospitals that have existing child care facilities should contact their [OCFS regional office](#) in regard to expanding capacity, hours, and age groups.
- Hospitals can create pop-up drop-in child care programs which are not subject to OCFS regulatory oversight. Hospitals that are interested in exercising drop-in care options should contact OCFS central office at (518) 486-7768.

OCFS has issued [guidance](#) providing additional information on these options, best practices, planning considerations and checklists, and forms.

UHS has established an emergency drop-in child care support program with an expected capacity of up to 200 children kindergarten age through age 12. It is being managed by UHS staff and volunteers who have been trained per the latest state and local child care regulations. UHS established the program consistent with the OCFS guidance and is willing to share how they quickly operationalized and implemented the program. If you are interested in learning more, please contact IHA at [covid@iroquois.org](mailto:covid@iroquois.org).

## HERDS 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.

Recent changes to the survey include new questions about specimen collection sites and ventilator usage and availability. DOH stresses the importance of providing contact information for the person primarily responsible for completing that day's survey, including a phone number they can be directly reached that evening to clarify or confirm data. That person should also have electronic or print access to the survey data.

## SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT:

The State has indicated plans to purchase 2 million N95 masks. While the Governor has suggested the bulk of these masks will be sent to downstate providers, IHA is working around the clock to ensure our upstate member hospitals have the resources necessary to address this epidemic. New York apparel manufacturers are converting their operations to begin manufacturing masks and other medical equipment. The State has also reportedly purchased 6,000 additional critically needed ventilators and is relying on federal government to fill the gap.

### **UISS/Premier Members**

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

### **[COVID-19 Weekly Call Update \(March 18\)](#)**

### **UISS/Non-Premier Members**

Find information on Supplier updates below:

**Becton-Dickinson (BD)** - provided a [company statement on COVID-19](#) which includes information on status of operations in China, operations throughout the rest of the world, product availability and business continuity planning and supporting the global response. BD has the following products on manual allocation:

- BD Alcohol Swab sold to retail pharmacies
- BD Universal Viral Transport (UVT) System (swabs, vials, & prepackaged Kits)
- BD MAX™ System and BD MAX™ Open-System Reagents [Total Nucleic Acid (TNA) reagent suite]

**Medline** - In a [letter to customers about production](#), Medline highlights that their Wuhan facilities are back up after being down almost 2 months, however China is still prioritizing PPE for the domestic China market. They predict a continued impact for face masks, PPE, traditional wound care, surgical drapes, and components for standard and custom packs.

**McKesson** - [Customer Letter](#) states that manufactures have placed limits on the number of products McKesson can purchase, including products such as PPE and IV solutions.

**Diversey** - [Ramping up production](#) of their disinfection products due to demand but they are exercising their force majeure language as well to cover their increased production cost.

### **Process for Requesting State Resources**

Hospitals 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.

## **NEW CDC & DOH 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.

- [CDC | Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations](#) - Updated 3/19
- [CDC | FAQs about Hand Hygiene for Healthcare Personnel](#) - 3/18
- [CDC| New Recommendations and Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of PPE](#) - Updated 3/17
- [CDC | Healthcare Professionals: FAQs Answers](#) - Updated 3/17
- [NYSDOH | Pregnancy Guidance for Providers](#) - 3/21
- [NYSDOH | Guidance for Medicaid Transportation Managers and Brokers](#) - 3/21

- [NYSDOH | Guidance for Facilitated Enrollment Agencies for the Aged, Blind and Disabled](#) - 3/21
- [NYSDOH | Guidance for Nursing Home Transition and Diversion \(NHTD\) and Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\)](#) - 3/19
- [NYSDOH | Guidance on Seeking Emergency Approvals](#) - Updated 3/19
- [NYSDOH | Suspension of Hospital Visitation](#) - 3/18
- [NYSDOH | Updated Specimen Collection Guidance \(Nasopharyngeal Swab Only\)](#) - 3/17
- [NYSDOH | Suspension of Adult Day Health Care Program Services](#) - 3/17
- [NYSDOH | Suspension of Adult Care Facilities Day Programs for Non-Residents](#) - 3/17

## IHA MEMBERS ON COVID-19:

While Governor Cuomo has asked companies and individuals to either donate or make masks to address growing shortages, hospitals in the Capital Region have [set guidelines](#) around these donations to ensure the health and safety of the hospital, its employees and the community at large.

[Let us know](#) what best practices and processes your hospital has implemented to combat coronavirus.

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

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