

COVID-19 Daily Report to Members ~ April 17, 2020



Looking back through the data and news in another week of the COVID-19 pandemic, I think it's helpful to reflect on a number of positive developments we saw this week.

First and foremost is the effect Governor Little's stay home order is having. We are seeing a diminishing number of new cases and slowing of hospital admissions to both acute and ICU beds. We expect to see the number of deaths follow this trend in the coming days. We are also excited to see signs of recovery for those who are afflicted with COVID-19. The state's [revised dashboard](#) is showing 390 people have recovered and we're hearing more about patients being able to go home after lengthy intubations. Based on the science and medical experts, we know the Governor's decision to extend the order was the right call.

Today's approval of Idaho's IMD waiver also addresses a concern hospitals have had for a number of years. The waiver, which was submitted before the pandemic, will be useful in "normal" operations as well as during crisis planning. The waiver will allow Medicaid patients - who don't meet the physical needs of an ED or an acute bed, but are still suffering from behavioral health issues - to be cared for in the right environment.

As [reported earlier this week](#), the Governor's Working Group has a new model to help gauge a path to reopening at both community and statewide levels. This localized model takes into consideration mitigation measures to help determine the impacts of policy decisions like the continuation of the stay home order. It will be one of the key tools in the Governor's decision-making.

This continues to be a challenging time for everyone. The decisions at your hospitals and at the state level are among the most difficult professionally I expect many of us will have to make. As with many painful parts of history, some very kind and graceful stories emerge. I hope you can take a moment and reflect on a few of those in your hospital and your community before you get back to the challenging and difficult work taking care of the people around you.

~Brian Whitlock, President/CEO

## Reimbursement & Policy

### [Congressman Simpson talks federal funding with CEOs](#)

In preparation for the next round of Federal coronavirus relief, Congressman Mike Simpson reached out to several of our IHA members in his Congressional District today for feedback on implementation of the CARES Act, and input for what observers are calling Stimulus 4.0 – the next round of Federal funding.

Our hospital CEOs thanked the Congressman for the first tranche of the \$100 billion in funding for healthcare providers and asked that he encourage HHS to move quickly on getting the next round of funding out the door. For some hospitals, that first bit of financial relief was an amount equal to what they need to make their next payroll – enough to keep them running for another two weeks.

Other issues raised included changing statutory language so that future SBA Paycheck Protection Program funds can include county and district hospitals. Additionally, the Congressman was asked to encourage forgiveness of the accelerated Medicare payments hospitals have requested. And, hospitals asked for whatever help the Federal government could give in expanding testing supplies available in rural states like Idaho.

The current interpretation of the CARES Act is that the \$1.25 billion that the state will receive cannot go toward local units of government – county and district hospitals – to help cover lost revenue – but he is working with Secretary Azar to try to get clarification on that.

Congressman Simpson asked the small group of hospital CEOs and the IHA to express his appreciation, and the appreciation of all of Congress, for the work that is being done on the front lines. He indicated that the success that they've been able to have in moving these relief packages through Congress quickly is because of the respect they have for the dedicated healthcare workers helping our nation get through this pandemic.

## Resources & Equipment

### [Cybersecurity info for physicians, hospital personnel](#)

With so many healthcare personnel working remotely, additional vigilance is needed to thwart cyber attacks. Today, the AMA and AHA released a [joint cybersecurity resource](#) designed for physicians and hospitals but which has many helpful ideas for any members of your team working from home. The resource includes checklists, sources, tips and advice to keep protections up to date with evolving cyberattacks.

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