

COVID-19 Daily Report to Members ~ April 22, 2020



Governor to announce next steps

Tomorrow, Governor Little will hold a press conference to talk about the next phases of Idaho's Coronavirus economic recovery. The conference begins tomorrow at 11a MT/10a PT and can be streamed through [Idaho Public Television](#).

As the Governor makes decisions on how to reopen Idaho's economy, the capacity of our healthcare system will be a key part of those decisions. As we have heard from the beginning, the Governor is placing an extremely high priority on our hospital teams and making sure they are healthy and equipped to answer their community's needs.

Reimbursement & Policy

HHS announces additional allocation of CARES Act funds

In the CARES Act, \$100 billion was allocated to healthcare providers, including hospitals on the frontline of the COVID-19 outbreak. \$30 billion has already been distributed directly to hospitals, based on Medicare fee-for-service reimbursements in 2019. \$20 billion more will be distributed this week based on 2018 net patient revenue.

As HHS begins to distribute the remaining \$50 billion from the CARES Act, they have **announced four new target allocations**, as follows:

- \$10 billion will be allocated for a targeted distribution to hospitals located in COVID-19 **high impact areas**. Hospitals can apply for a portion of the funds by providing four data points via an authentication portal before midnight PT, Thursday April 23. This portal is live, and hospitals have already been contacted by HHS (by email on April 12th) to provide this information. The Administration will use the data it receives to distribute the targeted funds to where the impact from COVID-19 is greatest.
- \$10 billion will be allocated for **rural health clinics and hospitals**, most of which operate on especially thin margins and are far less likely to be profitable than their urban counterparts.
- \$400 million will be allocated for **Indian Health Service** facilities, distributed on the basis of operating expenses. Indian Country is also being impacted by COVID-19.
- A remaining portion of the \$100 billion Provider Relief Fund will be used to reimburse healthcare providers, at Medicare rates, for **COVID-related treatment of the uninsured**. If a provider has provided treatment for uninsured COVID-19 patients on or after February 4, 2020, they can request claims reimbursement through the program and will be reimbursed at Medicare rates, subject to available funding. Providers can register for the program on April 27, 2020 and begin submitting claims in early May 2020.

HHS/HRSA awards nearly \$165 million for rural communities

Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) **awarded nearly \$165 million** to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in rural communities, as follows:

1. \$150 million to support small rural hospitals funded through the Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (Idaho Department of Health and Welfare received \$2,276,559)
2. \$11.5 million to provide additional funding to 14 HRSA-funded Telehealth Resource Centers (TRCs) to provide technical assistance on telehealth for rural and underserved areas by providing technical support in areas such as equipment acquisition, payment policy, system design and licensing and credentialing. Idaho is part of the **Northwest Regional Telehealth Resource Center** located in Utah.

Resources & Equipment

National Practitioner Data Bank query fees to be waived

The National Practitioner Data Bank will reimburse entities conducting queries via query credits, for March 1 through May 31. The NPDB assists in hiring, licensing and credentialing decisions through its repository of reports on health care fraud and abuse. For information, join NPDB's April 23 call at 11a MT / 10a PT (888-566-6153, access code is 1104687).

NW Regional Telehealth Resource Center policy update

Telehealth has been recognized as a safe means of delivering care during the current coronavirus public health emergency. Several federal and state agencies have relaxed regulations to facilitate the delivery of telehealth. **This guide** compiles links to updates to policies and helpful resources all in one location.

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