

COVID-19 Report to Members - July 23, 2020

Updates are sent on Mondays and Thursdays, unless there's breaking news.

Repeating Stage 4...again

With a continuing acceleration of COVID cases and hospitalizations, it was not a surprise that Governor Little announced today that Idaho will remain in Stage 4 of the Idaho Rebounds plan.

The Governor is visiting several of the state's seven health districts today in support of the continued state and local collaboration in responding to this pandemic. All of the state's health districts have met or will meet this week. The actions include:

- **Southwest District Health** – After having to postpone the meeting twice due to security concerns, the board voted to recommend face coverings when there is a certain level of community spread. Of note, Canyon County, which is part of this district, is a current hot spot.
- **Eastern Idaho Health District** – In a unanimous vote, the board passed a mandatory mask order and a limit for gatherings of more than 150 in Bonneville County. The county was moved to moderate risk in the Regional Response Plan.
- **South Central Public Health** – Yesterday, the board adopted a resolution "strongly encouraging" masks to be worn. Twin Falls is another current hot spot for cases.
- **Southeastern Idaho Health District** – The board adopted a regional response plan allowing risk levels to be applied to a community or geographic area within the health district. However, no mask mandate was included in the response for either the moderate or critical levels, only that they would be highly encouraged.
- **Panhandle Health District** had not yet concluded their meeting at the time of publication.

Reimbursement & Policy

HHS outlines relief fund reporting for healthcare providers

This week, HHS shared initial reporting information for those healthcare providers who received relief funds through either the CARES Act or Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act including:

General Distributions:

- Initial Medicare Distribution
- Additional Medicare Distribution
- Medicaid, Dental & CHIP Distribution

Targeted Distributions:

- High Impact Area Distribution
- Rural Distribution
- Skilled Nursing Facilities Distribution
- Indian Health Service Distribution
- Safety Net Hospital Distribution

While detailed information won't be released until August 17 and a reporting portal isn't expected until October 1, HHS did provide the following information on reporting timing:

- All recipients must report within 45 days of the end of calendar year 2020 (or no later than Feb. 15, 2021) on their expenditures through the period ending Dec. 31, 2020.
- Recipients who have expended funds in full prior to Dec. 31, 2020 may submit a single final report at any time during the window that begins Oct. 1, 2020, but no later than Feb. 15, 2021.
- Recipients with funds unexpended after Dec. 31, 2020, must submit a second and final report no later than July 31, 2021.
- Detailed reporting instructions and a data collection template with the necessary data elements will be available through the HRSA website by Aug. 17, 2020.

US hospitals expected to lose over \$323 billion

The American Hospital Association (AHA) recently released an [analysis](#) of the tremendous fiscal impact the pandemic is having on hospitals. Highlights from the report include:

- Without CARES Act funding, hospital margins would have been -15% in the second quarter of 2020. However, even with these funds, hospital margins are still expected to drop to -3% in the second quarter of 2020. Before COVID-19, the median hospital margin was a modest 3.5%.
- In the most optimistic scenario, which assumes a slow and steady decrease in COVID-19 cases, median margins could be -1% by the fourth quarter of 2020.
- Under another scenario that assumes periodic COVID-19 surges similar to the current case increases, margins could sink to -11%.

This information coincides with a [previous AHA report](#) which estimates total losses of at least \$323 billion throughout 2020.

Quality & Patient Safety

Who's at risk for severe COVID?

Yesterday, the CDC updated the list of [underlying medical conditions that most lead to severe illness](#) for those with COVID-19. Updated from a list originally published in March, this revision is derived from published reports, press articles, unreviewed pre-printed studies, and internal data from December 1 through July 10.

The conditions are categorized as: strongest and most consistent evidence; mixed evidence; or limited evidence. One of the most notable additions to the list was the [inclusion of cancer](#) which was added last week. No conditions from the previous posting were removed. Conditions with the higher level of evidence pointing to more severe illness from COVID-19 include:

- serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- cancer
- chronic kidney disease
- COPD
- obesity (BMI > 30)
- sickle cell disease
- solid organ transplantation
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

Virtual Meetings, Education & Updates

Webinar ~ Communicating from Behind the Mask

Our friends at the Georgia Hospital Association are offering this complimentary webinar which focuses on the story of communication between a patient, his family, and the physician during the patient's almost two-month battle against COVID-19.

Communicating from Behind the Mask
Thursday, July 30 – 10:30a MT / 9:30a PAC

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