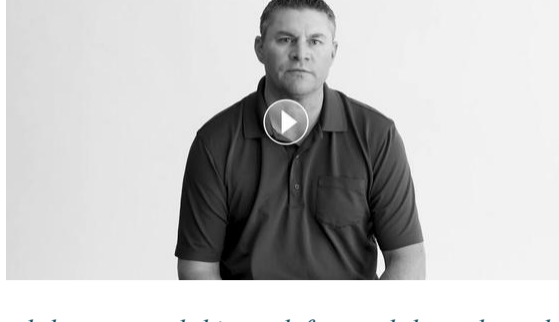


COVID-19 Report to Members ~ December 3, 2020

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



One Idaho released three new ads this week featured throughout this Update. The ads highlight COVID survivors, healthcare workers and parents. Hospitals are encouraged to post and reshare these videos in hopes that more Idahoans will do what they can to protect each other.

Idaho and U.S. Reach Grim Milestones

Idaho and the U.S. reached a slew of grim milestones in the COVID-19 pandemic this week. In the October 15 edition of the IHA COVID Update, we reported that the total number of confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases in Idaho exceeded 50,000. Six weeks later, we have more than doubled the total from the previous seven months. As of December 2, Idaho had reported 104,734 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19. Idaho will likely break the barrier of 1,000 COVID-19 deaths today, with 991 reported as of December 2 (<https://coronavirus.idaho.gov>). **In the U.S.**, there are more than 100,000 patients hospitalized with COVID-19, and the highest number of daily deaths was recorded yesterday, 3,157, far surpassing the previous peak of 2,607. There have been more than 273,000 COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic.

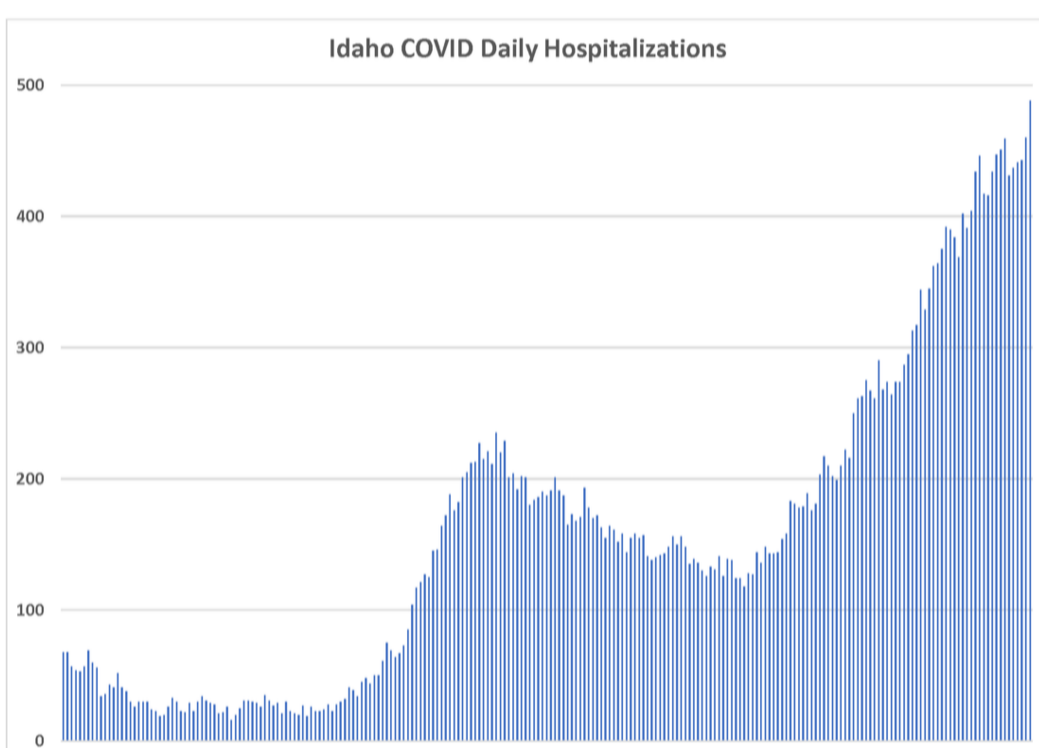
On December 1, 488 individuals were hospitalized in Idaho's acute care facilities with COVID-19, the highest number to date and a 13% increase in the five days since Americans celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday. Similarly, in the past five days, a median of 104 COVID-19 patients were receiving care in the intensive care units of Idaho facilities and 56 were receiving respiratory support via mechanical ventilation – also the highest numbers recorded to date in the pandemic.

While Idaho's daily COVID-19 reported case counts are disconcertingly high, the reported data is lower than the true burden because of delayed reporting from some public health districts. The delayed reporting hampers efforts to forecast the numbers of hospitalizations anticipated in the coming weeks, but we can expect numbers to rise, in part from breaks with social distancing measures over the Thanksgiving holiday.

Since the 50,000 case milestone chronicled in the October, the basic strategies for controlling the spread of SARS-CoV-2 have not changed: physical distancing, wearing face coverings, proper hygiene, and staying home if you are sick.

Researchers at Harvard, Rutgers, Northeastern and Northwestern universities have been conducting a survey of about 20,000 U.S. households monthly since April. They recently released two [reports](#) and found efforts to avoid contact with other people and public or crowded places decreased dramatically over the summer and into fall 2020. Idaho ranked 49th among states and the District of Columbia in social distancing and 47th in mask wearing during fall 2020.

As a tsunami of cases continue to crash into our healthcare system, Idahoans must redouble efforts to protect themselves and others with the strategies that work to avoid another dark milestone. While several vaccines are on the horizon, a long winter plagued by COVID is still here.



Reimbursement & Policy

CDC revises quarantine protocol

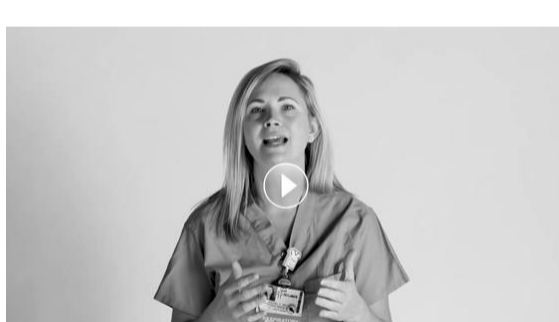
Yesterday, the CDC revised guidance on quarantine for those exposed or in close contact with COVID-19 positive individuals. Individuals can now end their quarantine after ten days without testing if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring or after seven days with a negative test within 48 hours. CDC updated guidance can be found [here](#).

CMS implements new codes for COVID

Beginning January 1, hospitals and providers can begin using new ICD-10 codes for documenting COVID-related conditions and treatments. CMS has assigned six new diagnosis codes for the conditions:

- pneumonia due to COVID-19;
- multisystem inflammatory syndrome;
- other systemic involvement of connective tissue;
- COVID-19 screening;
- suspected exposure to COVID-19; and
- personal history of COVID-19.

Twenty-one procedure codes for vaccines and therapeutics have also been assigned. For additional information, visit the [Latest News section](#) on the MS-DRG Classifications page.



Resources & Equipment

Initial vaccine allocation approved by ACIP

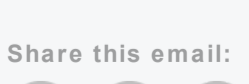
The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met on Tuesday to [make recommendations](#) for the allocation of the initial supplies of vaccines once they become available. They recommend having healthcare workers and residents in long-term care facilities be the first to receive the vaccinations (Phase 1a). Essential workers in education, food and agriculture, utilities, police, fire fighters, corrections and transportation make up Phase 1b.

The FDA has meetings scheduled in December to discuss EUAs for the first two vaccine candidates, BNT162b2 (Pfizer and BioNTech) and mRNA-1273 (Moderna). The first round of BNT162b2 vaccines is scheduled to arrive in Idaho in mid-December, and, if authorized by FDA, the logistics for vaccination will enroll. Vaccine doses will be distributed to facilities which have a signed provider agreement with IDHW. Idaho's COVID-19 [Vaccine Advisory Committee](#) will be meeting on Friday to continue refining the process.



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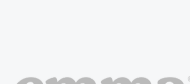


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