

## Governor talks Crisis Standards of Care

Today, Governor Brad Little again implored Idahoans to be compliant with the simple social measures that will calm the surge of patients in Idaho hospitals. The Governor's comments focused largely on the potential of having to implement Crisis Standards of Care if we are unable to slow the rate of infection and hospitalizations.

To help the general public understand the need to avoid implementing Crisis Standards of Care, he explained how the normal flow of care and services will be interrupted or delayed for ordinary, everyday needs like car accidents, diabetes treatments, and access to emergency care both at the hospital and through ambulance services. As Crisis Standards of Care haven't been implemented in Idaho hospitals in recent memory, including during the H1N1 outbreak, most people might not understand what that means for them and their families. Governor Little tried to make it clear to everyone the impact of being forced to take such severe action in Idaho.

*"We remain at a dangerous precipice. If we cannot – collectively and individually – do a better job to slow the spread of this virus, this situation will affect you personally, whether you get COVID or not."*

Governor Little was joined by Kristen Connelly an ICU nurse with St. Luke's. She noted that in her 24 years she's never seen anything like this pandemic. She shared her recent experience with a young mother who lost her fight with COVID despite the herculean efforts of her healthcare team and her own fortitude. Kristen said, "I carry her story with me every day."

Dr. Robert Scoggins, a pulmonologist with Kootenai Health, spoke of his experience to explain, once again, the serious levels of acuity for patients being treated for COVID. Combined with the first-hand testimony of a recovered patient from Magic Valley, their information addressed the misinformation that this virus is easily treated and no more serious than the flu.

Questions from the media focused largely on why the Governor was not taking stronger action on a statewide level or giving the order for a mask mandate. He conceded that people would be more likely to comply with a mask order if it came from local authorities rather than a directive from Boise. Rather than mandates, the focus of his administration is on compliance, which will come from Idahoans choosing to do the right thing when they understand how this illness will impact them and those around them.

He also noted that Idaho Code delineates the process for addressing public health through the Public Health Districts. He rebuked and condemned recent attacks on elected officials and to the Anne Frank Memorial and offered his support for these officials and their continued safety.

## Reimbursement & Policy

### Board of Health reviewing Crisis Standards of Care

Friday at 9a MTN / 8a PAC the Department of Health and Welfare's Board will meet to discuss the proposed temporary rule regarding Crisis Standards of Care. This proposal outlines the process and responsibilities to allow for the timely activation of Crisis Standards of Care during an emergency or extraordinary circumstance when Idaho's healthcare system is overwhelmed and providers are unable to meet the usual standards of care.

Under this proposed temporary rule, activation would take place at the state level through the Department of Health and Welfare either through the Crisis Standards of Care Activation Advisory Committee or by the Director of Health and Welfare if the situation warrants an immediate response.

Idaho Code allows for state agencies to implement temporary rules that are effective immediately and must have the approval of the Governor as well as follow certain procedural steps. This practice is used to cover contingencies that require immediate action for a specific amount of time.

To attend the virtual meeting:

**Dial - 415-655-0003 ~ meeting number 177 573 3175 ~ password 74795645**  
**IDHW Board Meeting Agenda**

### HHS adds new data reporting requirements

Beginning December 18, HHS is requiring hospitals to report daily influenza data. These fields have been active but were optional until the policy change last week. This change was included in the HHS guidance issued yesterday. New data fields to track therapeutics were also added this week and will be required beginning January 8. These fields cover inventory of therapeutics, such as Bamnanimivab, and are reported on a weekly basis.

As a reminder, CMS is now sending enforcement letters to those hospitals that do not meet 100% reporting compliance. For the most recent reporting period, 94% of Idaho hospitals were in compliance. Facilities can now directly update data for the past seven days (as opposed to 4) in TeleTracking. For data updates outside that window, hospitals must contact TeleTracking Support (877.570.6903 - press 7).

## Resources & Equipment

### Pfizer vaccine approval moves forward

Today, the FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) met to consider the Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine candidate (BNT162b2) for emergency use. After eight hours of presentations and discussion, they voted 17 to 4 (with one abstaining) in support of issuing the EUA for the vaccine.

Tomorrow, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is scheduled to meet to discuss the vaccine and could issue their recommendation. After these two steps, an EUA could be issued as soon as this weekend with vaccines arriving in Idaho as early as next week.

Prior to the meeting, the FDA confirmed the efficacy and safety claims made on this vaccine in the briefing document prepared for the meeting. The FDA found no specific safety concerns but noted that more data is needed to understand the vaccine's efficacy against asymptomatic infection. Additionally, the FDA has indicated they would like to see additional testing to determine the vaccine's ability to prevent transmission.

Discussion at the VRBPAC meeting today included questions about pregnant and nursing women being allowed to receive the vaccine; including 16- and 17-year-olds in the EUA; allergic reactions that occurred in two individuals in England who received the vaccine; and how to address those in the placebo group who did not receive the vaccine.

More detailed coverage of today's meeting can be found here.

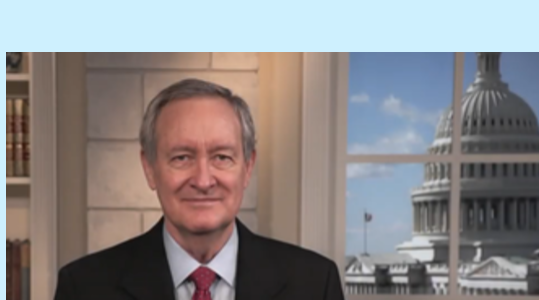
### Testing news briefs

- Yesterday, the FDA authorized the first direct-to-consumer COVID test kit from LabCorp. The kit allows for individuals to self-collect the sample and send to a lab for processing. Those who receive a positive or invalid result are called by a healthcare provider. Negative results are delivered digitally. The Pixel by LabCorp COVID-19 home collection kit can be purchased without a prescription online or in stores.
- The CDC recently updated its guidance on enforcement discretion during the public health emergency for labs conducting molecular and antigen tests on asymptomatic individuals. The update addresses, in part, situations where point of care tests are performed outside of their EUAs based on FDA information.



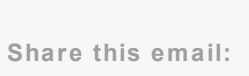
*Musicians On Call collaborated with the AHA to offer hospitals and health systems exclusive access to Hope for the Holidays Presented by Citi, a virtual concert featuring award-winning artists to bring holiday cheer to patients, families and all hospital employees. Featured artists include Dolly Parton, Kelly Clarkson, Billie Eilish, Leslie Odom Jr., Meghan Trainor, Josh Groban, HAIM and Pentatonix, to name a few.*

*Senator Mike Crapo sent this message of thanks to Idaho's healthcare workers.*



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