



## COVID-19 Report to Members ~ January 14, 2021

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

### Reimbursement & Policy

#### New data reporting on vaccinations

HHS updated reporting guidance on Tuesday to include hospital reporting on vaccine administration to healthcare workers and patients. Weekly reporting began on January 13 and is optional at this point. After seeing many "optional" federal data reporting requests become required and a Condition of Participation, we expect no different with these new fields. HHS has also indicated that this data may be made available to the public via the HHS Protect public portal.

Seven new fields have been added to HHS Protect:

- previous week's vaccination doses administered to healthcare personnel;
- current healthcare personnel who have not yet received any doses;
- current healthcare personnel who have received one in a series of doses;
- current healthcare personnel who have received a completed series;
- total number of current healthcare personnel;
- previous week's number of patients administered the first dose in a series; and
- previous week's number of patients who have received a completed series.

The fields are available in the TeleTracking system for those hospitals that report directly. For those who use IRTS (Idaho Resource Tracking System) to report to both the state and TeleTracking/HHS Protect, it is our understanding that IRTS is working to include those fields and they are expected to go live within the next few days.

### Resources & Equipment

#### A primer on how RNA vaccines are making their mark

This week, [Nature published](#) a look at the history of RNA vaccine development which began in the 1990s. Instead of the more commonplace practice of using a weakened form of the virus which takes time to create, RNA vaccines use the virus' genetic code to stimulate immune responses. The process of developing, creating, modifying and testing RNA vaccines is much faster than traditional vaccines, which has been key to rapid vaccine approvals and distribution during this pandemic.

The [Nature article](#) not only shares how these vaccines work, but also looks at applications beyond COVID-19 and challenges in implementing RNA vaccines. The article provides a clear explanation for laypeople to understand how these new vaccines came to market and how they will work in the fight against COVID-19 and other illnesses.

#### Idaho reaches milestone of 150,000 COVID-19 cases

In the October 15, 2020 edition of the IHA COVID Update, we reported that the total number of confirmed and probable cases in Idaho exceeded 50,000. As of December 2nd – six weeks later – Idaho had more than doubled the previous seven months total with 104,734 confirmed and probable cases. In the six weeks since, Idaho's total number of reported confirmed and probable cases has surpassed the 150,000-case milestone, with 152,364 cases reported as of January 13, 2021.

The plot of cases by onset date shown on the Idaho's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) shows the initial spike in cases in March, followed by a decrease in cases after the self-isolate order, and subsequent surge after Idaho entered Stage 4 of re-opening. Although there was weekly variation in incidence from early July to early September, there was a long-term downward trend. Idaho experienced a dramatic surge in cases from early September through the first week of December, punctuated by spikes after Halloween and Thanksgiving. Rates decreased after early December, but there was another spike post-Christmas. IHA continues to work in concert with IDHW to monitor post-holiday increases associated with New Year's Eve/Day gatherings.

Although the addition of 50,000 cases in the past 6 weeks speaks to the unrelenting nature of COVID-19 in Idaho, recent trends in many areas of the state are encouraging. Notwithstanding the spike around Christmas, Idaho's general trajectory of new cases was in decline during December. It is difficult to disentangle how public health practices, mitigation strategies, and other events contributed to the decrease in rates of new cases; however, it is clear that the combination of Idahoan's efforts are showing results.

With the dedication of so many Idahoans to follow the public health recommendations and the continued roll-out of vaccination efforts, we are hopeful that we might avoid another milestone.

#### Locating sites for monoclonal antibody treatments

A new [treatment locator](#) to help physicians and patients find potential locations for monoclonal antibody therapeutics treatment was launched this week. These therapeutics are authorized to treat patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 who are at high risk of developing severe symptoms or requiring hospitalization. The locator, maintained by HHS, shows facilities open to the general public where either asirivimab/imdevimab or bamlanivimab have been delivered.

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