

## COVID-19 Report to Members ~ March 18, 2021

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

Editor's note ~ Beginning next week, IHA's COVID Update will be sent on Tuesdays, unless we have breaking news. Thanks for all you continue to do!

### Idaho to accept next round of relief funds

Today, Governor Little announced that the state will accept Idaho's allocation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) signed by President Biden last week.

Idaho is set to receive \$2.8 billion in funding dedicated to COVID response and capital projects, local governments, and other uses. In addition, Idahoans and Idaho businesses are slated to receive \$2 billion through stimulus checks, PPP loans and support for specific businesses like restaurants and live venues.

While guidance from the US Treasury Department is pending, State Budget Director Alex Adams noted that tax relief isn't off the table if Idaho accepts ARPA funds. He noted the ARPA funds cannot be the source for the tax relief but taking them does not preclude the state from providing it through other means. Idaho is experiencing record budget surpluses that could be the means for tax relief.

The Governor reiterated his desire to see one-time and on-going tax relief as well as long range and one-time investments that don't create future budget obligations. As the state has four years to spend most of the ARPA funds, he supports a "strategic and thoughtful approach" and will be meeting with legislators, business groups and others to determine best uses.

### Reimbursement & Policy

#### Relief funding targets testing and monoclonal antibodies

In addition to the announcement by Governor Little on Idaho's relief fund allocation, several federal agencies are announcing funding plans and priorities this week supported by the American Rescue Plan Act.

Idaho will receive nearly \$54 million to help schools establish screening programs. HHS and the CDC have allocated \$10 billion to states for screening programs for teachers, staff and students to help schools safely return to in-person instruction. The CDC's [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation](#) outlines school screening programs, while the FDA released this [fact sheet](#) for schools, businesses and others looking to establish screening programs.

For screenings in long-term care facilities, \$225 million has been allocated for the production and delivery of 50 million Abbott BinaxNOW rapid point-of-care antigen tests.

HHS also [announced](#) a \$150 million investment to increase access to monoclonal antibody treatments for patients in vulnerable communities. Funding may support infusion center capacity, additional staffing, and equipment.

### Quality & Patient Safety

#### OSHA targets hospitals, others with enforcement program

On March 12, OSHA released a [National Emphasis Program](#) focused on protecting employees at higher risk of contracting COVID, including hospitals and other healthcare providers. The program's focus is to "ensure that workers are protected from retaliation" when reporting unsafe conditions. The accompanying [Interim Enforcement Response Plan](#) details the agency's response strategies. For additional information, please review this [AHA Special Bulletin](#).

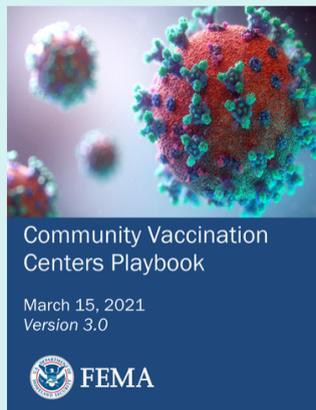
### Resources & Equipment

#### Rapid Community Assessment Guide

The CDC has released a [Rapid Community Assessment Guide](#) to help public health, hospitals and others better understand their community's needs, hesitations, and acceptance regarding vaccines. The three-week system is designed to help groups:

- identify communities of focus at risk for low uptake of vaccines;
- understand what those communities are thinking about the vaccines;
- assess barriers and identify solutions to vaccine uptake;
- identify trusted leaders, messengers, and other communication channels; and
- identify areas of intervention and potential strategies to increase confidence in the vaccines.

FEMA has released an updated resource for hospitals and others providing vaccines. The [Community Vaccination Centers Playbook](#) provides checklists and staffing needs to help guide the set-up and operation of different sized vaccination sites. This version also includes guidance for [mobile vaccination operations](#).



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