

COVID-19 Report to Members ~ June 29, 2021

Reports are sent on Tuesdays, unless there's breaking news.

## Reimbursement & Policy

### Response to OSHA emergency temporary standards

In response to the [OSHA emergency temporary standard](#) which providers must meet beginning next week, the AHA [submitted a letter](#) asking for a delay in implementation as well as an extension on the comment period.

Citing conflicts between the OSHA requirements and the CDC guidelines hospitals are currently following as well as the lack of time and resources to implement the requirements, AHA has called for OSHA to push implementation back six months and open the comment period through August 20 to allow for further review and comment by hospitals and others.

### Changes for monoclonal antibody distribution, EUA

With the rising prevalence of variants, specifically the Gamma (P.1 / Brazil) and Beta (B.1.351 / South African) variants, HHS has paused distribution of some monoclonal antibody treatments.

In an [announcement](#) released last week, HHS said it was immediately pausing distribution of the antibody combination bamlanivimab and etesevimab as well as bamlanivimab. This follows the [CDC's determination](#) that the treatments were not active against the Gamma and Beta variants.

While those treatments are no longer available to providers, HHS did note that alternative therapies REGEN-COV or sotrovimab are available and expected to work against the variants.

In other monoclonal antibody news, the FDA issued a [revision](#) to the EUA for REGEN-COV on June 3. Under the revised EUA, the patient dose for the product has changed from 1200mg casirivimab and 1200mg imdevimab to 600mg of each.

## Quality & Patient Safety

### Mitigation strategies for diminished blood supply

Increasing demands on the nation's blood supply are likely leading to a shortage which is expected to impact hospitals across the country. The American Red Cross and other national organizations are seeing signs of a severe shortage after a decrease in donations during 2020 and patients now returning for postponed treatments. The American Association of Blood Banks recently warned that the nation's supply had dropped to the "red" level, meaning most blood banks have less than a day's supply on hand.

Today, the AHA shared a number of [resources](#) designed to help hospitals, providers, and patients understand and manage the blood supply in their facilities.

- AHA Blood Management Toolkit: Developed in collaboration with the AHA's Physician Alliance and the AABB, the [toolkit](#) provides valuable resources for hospitals and health systems, clinicians and patients.
- AABB 10 Things Providers Can Do To Extend the Blood Supply: As part of their efforts to provide resources to hospitals and health systems to better manage current blood supply, AABB compiled a [list of 10 points](#) that providers can focus on to help extend the blood supply.
- Key Considerations for Providers and Patients: In an effort to reduce improper blood utilization, AABB provided [five key considerations](#) both providers and patients should consider to ensure they are "choosing wisely" with regard to blood supply utilization.
- Recommendations for the Use of Group O Red Blood Cells: In 2019, AABB released a [bulletin](#) outlining recommendations for the use of group O red blood cells.
- Adoption of Patient Blood Management Practices: Adopting patient blood management practices (PBM) within your organization can help reduce unnecessary transfusions. While PBM helps manage blood supply directly, it also has the potential to produce improvements in patient outcomes, decreases in length of stay and overall cost savings. PBM guidelines for red blood cells can be found [here](#) and guidelines for platelets can be found [here](#).
- Patient Blood Management Infographic: To ensure hospitals and health systems are able to quickly communicate the importance of patient blood management practices, AABB developed a [two-page infographic](#) detailing the benefits of implementing proper patient blood management programs.

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