

COVID-19 Report to Members ~ August 24, 2021

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

Getting help for hospitals

With COVID cases and hospitalizations reaching critical levels, more health professionals are needed to help. We're asking readers to share this information within their communities and other groups to help recruit patient care volunteers. Hospitals, urgent care centers, and other facilities desperately need more help. For this surge, we need all hands on deck.

Several state licensing boards have implemented processes to again allow nurses, physician assistants, physicians, pharmacists, and respiratory therapists to temporarily reactivate their licenses. Retired practitioners, those not currently active, or recent graduates may be eligible to rejoin the field (see below). Some have waived the usual licensure fees for those assisting during the surge.

In addition to contacting the appropriate licensing agency below, individuals will also need to register with the Medical Reserve Corps (www.volunteeridaho.com) to have their names submitted to the appropriate agency and to have their application request expedited. Hospitals can request assistance for available healthcare workers through the Medical Reserve Corps.

Health Professionals Eligible for Temporary Licensing

Nurses:

- Nurses with unencumbered, inactive licenses
- Current nursing students wanting to serve in an apprenticeship model
- New nursing graduates
- Multi-State license holders from any compact state
- Nurses licensed in states not in the compact, but who have graduated from an approved nursing program and have passed the NCLEX or a state exam
- Contact - Idaho Board of Nursing (208.577.2467); [more information](#)

Physicians, PAs, Therapists:

- Physicians with inactive or expired licenses
- PAs with inactive or expired licenses
- Respiratory Therapists with expired licenses
- Contact - Idaho Board of Medicine (208.327.7000); [more information](#)

Pharmacists:

- Proof of 30 hours of continuing educations credits over the last 24 months is required
- Contact - Idaho Board of Pharmacy (208.334.2356)

Another step being taken by the Department of Health and Welfare and Idaho Office of Emergency Management is to create infusion sites for those patients who need the monoclonal antibody treatments. These treatments are for those individuals who have COVID and are at risk for severe symptoms and hospitalization. Relocating the service to another site may take some pressure off over-taxed healthcare staff. The first site is planned for North Idaho.

COMMENTARY

FDA approval of COVID-19 vaccine may prevent looming hospital capacity crisis

Unfortunately, there isn't any outside help to be had. Idaho is on its own, writes guest columnist Brian Whitlock.

IHA President and CEO, Brian Whitlock, explains the crisis facing Idaho hospitals and encourages Idahoans to vaccinate.

Quality & Patient Safety

FDA approval of Pfizer vaccine

Yesterday's FDA [approval of the Pfizer vaccine](#) is yet another milestone in combating the pandemic. With full approval for those 16 years of age and older, Comirnaty (koe-mir-na-tee), the name under which the vaccine will be marketed, is the first fully approved vaccine in the United States.

Hopefully, this will help expand the five week trend which has seen more Idahoans get vaccinated. Continuation of this upward trend is one crucial step in lessening the surge's impact on hospitals and healthcare workers.

In the review, the FDA analyzed data from approximately 20,000 vaccine recipients and 20,000 placebo recipients who did not have evidence of the infection within a week of receiving the second dose. The resulting effectiveness for Comirnaty in preventing the disease is 91%.

Safety data was also reviewed and encompassed 22,000 vaccinated individuals and 22,000 who received the placebo. Safety outcomes for more than half of the trial participants were monitored for at least four months, with 12,000 monitored for at least six months.

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