



COVID-19 Report to Members ~ September 16, 2021

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Crisis Standards of Care expanded statewide

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The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) has activated **Crisis Standards of Care** (CSC) in accordance with IDAPA 16.02.09 – Crisis Standards of Care For Healthcare Entities. CSC is activated statewide because the massive increase of COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization in all areas of the state has exhausted existing resources. CSC was activated on Sept. 6 in North Idaho. This activation, declared today, expands the declaration to the rest of the state.

This action was taken after St. Luke's Health System requested that CSC be activated. DHW Director Dave Jeppesen convened the CSC Activation Advisory Committee virtually on Sept. 15. The committee recommended that CSC be activated statewide.

"Our hospitals and healthcare systems need our help. The best way to end crisis standards of care is for more people to get vaccinated. It dramatically reduces your chances of having to go to the hospital if you do get sick from COVID-19. In addition, please wear a mask indoors in public and outdoors when it's crowded to help slow the spread" said DHW Director Jeppesen. "The situation is dire – we don't have enough resources to adequately treat the patients in our hospitals, whether you are there for COVID-19 or a heart attack or because of a car accident."

Although DHW has activated CSC, hospitals will implement as needed and according to their own CSC policies. However, not all hospitals will move to that standard of care. If they are managing under their current circumstances, they can continue to do so.

Crisis standards of care are guidelines that help healthcare providers and systems decide how to deliver the best care possible under the extraordinary circumstances of an overwhelming disaster or public health emergency. The guidelines may be used when there are not enough healthcare resources to provide the usual standard of care to people who need it. The goal of crisis standards of care is to extend care to as many patients as possible and save as many lives as possible.

When crisis standards of care are in effect, people who need medical care may get care that is different from what they expect. For example, patients admitted to the hospital may find that hospital beds are not available or are in repurposed rooms (such as a conference room) or that needed equipment is not available. They may have to wait for a bed to open, or be moved to another hospital in or out of state that has the resources they need. Or they might not be prioritized for the limited resources that are available. In other words, someone who is otherwise healthy and would recover more rapidly may get treated or have access to a ventilator before someone who is not likely to recover.

The process to initiate crisis standards of care began when resources were limited to the point of affecting medical care. DHW Director Jeppesen convened the Crisis Standards of Care Activation Advisory Committee on Sept. 15, 2021, to review all the measures that were taken to provide care for the increased number of COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization. The committee determined that the ability of all Idaho hospitals and healthcare systems to deliver the usual standard of care has been severely affected by the extraordinary influx of patients, and all contingency measures have been exhausted. The committee recommended to the director that crisis standards of care be activated statewide. Director Jeppesen issued his decision on Sept. 16, 2021, under the authority vested in him through the temporary rule.

Efforts will continue with earnest to alleviate the resource constraints in the state caused by the massive increase in the number of COVID-19 patients needing hospitalization. The crisis standards of care will remain in effect until there are sufficient resources to provide the usual standard of care to all patients.

Learn more about crisis standards of care and see an FAQ at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/idaho-resources/>.

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