

July 14, 2020

**ILLINOIS HEALTH AND HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
FEDERAL ADVOCACY ALERT**

SUBJECT: IHA Alert: Urge Congress to Include Hospital Priorities in Next COVID-19 Legislation

Congress is working on the next COVID-19 relief legislation, and we need to make sure hospital and health system priorities are included. The Senate is expected to consider legislation later this month, and it is important to reach out to your U.S. Senators and Representatives now to ensure urgent hospital priorities are included in the next bill.

Action Requested: Please contact your Senators and Representatives (see template letter below that you can customize and send – OR send emails by [clicking here](#)) and urge them to support important policies in the next COVID-19 legislation, including:

- **Additional Resources for Hospitals.** Congress should direct additional, direct relief funds to hospitals, which are not only coping with a public health crisis, but also a financial crisis.
- **Limited Liability Protections.** Congress should safeguard frontline providers from legal action by implementing a limited waiver of liability for hospitals and healthcare professionals during the nationally designated COVID-19 emergency.
- **Loan Forgiveness/Improved Repayment Terms for the Medicare Accelerated/Advance Payment Program.** Congress should consider loan forgiveness and, at a minimum, take action to significantly improve the repayment requirements.
- **Expanded Health Coverage.** Congress should subsidize COBRA costs; open a special enrollment period for marketplace coverage; and increase eligibility for federal marketplace subsidies.
- **Federal Support for Healthcare Heroes.** Congress should provide additional resources to front-line caregivers and essential workers, such as support for child care, housing, transportation and bonus pay.
- **Extend and Increase FMAP.** Congress should extend and boost the federal matching assistance percentage an additional 5.8 percentage points from Jan 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021.
- **Expand Telehealth.** Congress should permanently extend flexibilities enacted during the pandemic, including lifting of geographic and originating site restrictions.

In addition to these priorities, a full list of IHA's COVID-19 legislative priorities is available [here](#). To read IHA's July 14 letter to the Congressional delegation outlining hospital and health system priorities, please click [here](#). For an infographic illustrating why Illinois hospitals need additional federal resources, please click [here](#).

To find your Representative's contact information click [here](#). Contact information for Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth may be found [here](#). Please email a copy of your letters to Sarah Macchiarola.

Questions:

Please [contact IHA](#).

TEMPLATE LETTER – Please place on hospital stationary and add your specific details and examples

July XX, 2020

Dear **Representative/Senator:**

On behalf of our **XXX** employees, our patients, and our community, **HOSPITAL NAME** appreciates the hard work you have done to help protect Illinoisans during this pandemic. This unprecedented public health emergency requires unprecedented actions, and we write with both gratitude and a request for additional assistance.

At **HOSPITAL NAME** we have worked tirelessly to prepare and adapt to care for COVID-19 patients. We have purchased supplies, retrained employees, and reorganized our facility to ensure we are ready to serve our community. Many of these supplies continue to be difficult to find and, when we do find them, they command as much as 10 times the normal price and shipping costs. We have built surge space, tracked down testing kits, and worked to secure medications and other supplies to care for the critically ill. The investments we have made are extraordinary. **SPECIFIC EXAMPLES**.

In addition to our efforts and expense to prepare, we stopped performing non-essential services for an extended period. These services are a significant portion of our normal revenue, and we are now in a financial as well as a health crisis. We do not expect that revenue to return in the near future: while we maintain proper health and safety protocols of distancing and sanitizing, as well as surge capacity, we simply will not be able to increase our schedule to recoup the losses we have incurred.

Congress has acted swiftly to establish and fund the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund, and we are grateful. However, the first few distributions have been based on formulas that do not offer appropriate recognition of the investments we have made or the lost revenue we have incurred. In fact, we have only received **\$XXX** and estimate our investment in our COVID-19 response and lost revenue to be more than **\$XXXX**. Specifically, we ask that you and your colleagues in the Congress include the following in the next COVID-19 legislative package:

- **Additional Resources for Hospitals.** Congress should direct additional, direct relief funds to hospitals, which are not only coping with a public health crisis, but also a financial crisis.
- **Limited Liability Protections.** Congress should safeguard frontline providers from legal action by implementing a limited waiver of liability for hospitals and healthcare professionals during the nationally designated COVID-19 emergency.
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As you work on additional relief for our country, please keep in mind that the successful reopening of the economy will depend on the security of the healthcare safety net provided by hospitals like **HOSPITAL NAME**.

ADD ADDITIONAL COMMENTS on other priorities outlined in IHA's letter to the delegation: coverage, liability protections, GME, etc.

Thank you again for your commitment to **HOSPITAL NAME** and our patients.

Sincerely,

NAME, TITLE, CONTACT INFORMATION