Illinois Health and Hospital Association

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois hospital and health system leaders are calling on the General Assembly to support healthcare by prioritizing policies to preserve the state's investment in hospitals, protect the 340B program, mitigate workforce-related staffing and regulatory issues, and secure implementation of the Medicaid Managed Care Organization (MCO) prior authorization reforms passed in 2024.

On Wednesday, May 13, more than 150 leaders of hospitals and health systems from across the state will meet with legislators from their respective districts during Hospital Advocacy Day organized by the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA).

"The record participation for our advocacy day underscores the urgency of the healthcare challenges facing our communities, including devastating cuts to Medicaid, delays in implementing MCO reforms, and efforts to restrict the 340B program, which provides critical healthcare services for our state's most underserved residents," said A.J. Wilhelmi, IHA President and CEO. "The hospital community is grateful for the opportunity to meet with Governor Pritzker and members of the Illinois General Assembly to stress the need for strong state support as hospitals continue to face financial instability and growing threats to access to care."

During Hospital Advocacy Day, hospital and health system leaders will advocate for support of the following healthcare priorities:

- House Bill 2371 (SA 2) – The Illinois Patient Access to 340B Pharmacy Protection Act prohibits pharmaceutical manufacturers from prohibiting, restricting or interfering with a local pharmacy that contracts with a 340B covered entity, such as a hospital or federally qualified health center (FQHC), to dispense medications acquired through the 340B program. The 340B program allows providers to stretch limited resources further, reinvest savings into patient services, expand access and reach more people, especially those who are uninsured or underinsured. This legislation will preserve the status quo—restoring the program to how it operated before manufacturers began arbitrarily limiting the number of contract pharmacies hospitals could work with, hindering access to critical healthcare services for the state's most underserved residents. The bill also strengthens transparency and accountability. It establishes clear reporting and transparency requirements so legislators and the public can see how 340B savings are being used—demonstrating how those dollars are reinvested directly into patient care, community programs, and services that benefit constituents in every legislative district. Passing HB 2371 SA2 would protect patient access to healthcare, support the providers serving our most vulnerable residents, and reaffirm Illinois' unwavering commitment to a robust, accessible healthcare delivery system — at no cost to taxpayers or the state.
- Protect Illinois' Medicaid Funding – IHA and the Illinois hospital community remain concerned about federal Medicaid cuts. H.R. 1 marks the most sweeping changes to Medicaid since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, exacerbating already dangerous hospital financial instability and threatening access to essential healthcare services nationwide. H.R.1's elimination of $1 trillion in Medicaid funding over the next 10 years represents the largest funding reduction to this critical safety net program since its inception 60 years ago. Illinois will lose up to an estimated $57 billion over the next decade—and the bulk of the cuts and impact fall disproportionately on hospitals. H.R. 1 will strip an estimated $48 billion in federal matching funds over 10 years. H.R. 1's massive rollback of support for the state's 3.4 million Medicaid patients and the hospitals that serve them will have a destabilizing impact on healthcare access and delivery in Illinois and across the country for years to come. Medicaid is not just a program – it is a lifeline for low-income families, children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

- Workforce Challenges – Illinois is facing a growing shortage across its healthcare workforce, affecting nurses, physicians, and other critical providers. Hospitals alone support approximately 521,000 jobs and generate $135.5 billion in economic activity, yet of Illinois' 102 counties, 89 are designated as health professional shortages areas. Illinois faces a significant healthcare workforce crisis, with projections showing a shortfall of approximately 15,000 nurses by 2026 and 6,200 physicians by 2030, including over 1,063 primary care providers.
- 72-Hour Rule and Gold Card Delays – Two of IHA's key MCO reforms, the 72-hour rule and the Gold Card program, were approved by the legislature in 2024, and are scheduled to go into effect July 1. Despite bipartisan legislative support for these reforms, the Governor's proposed budget delays implementation of the 72-hour rule until July 1, 2027, and the Gold Card program until Jan. 1, 2027. Further delays unnecessarily prolong harmful prior authorization barriers, delay patient access to medically necessary care, and weaken reforms the General Assembly has already determined are essential. Illinois cannot afford to postpone these protections any longer. The hospital community is urging lawmakers and the Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services to reject further delays and implement these important reforms.

Hospital Advocacy Day is an opportunity for hospital and health system leaders from communities throughout the state to engage directly with legislators and share first-hand the challenges they're facing and how legislation will impact their organizations, staff, and the patients they serve.

Statewide, hospitals and health systems are major job creators and economic engines in their communities, generating more than 521,000 direct and indirect jobs with an economic impact of $135.5 billion a year.

Learn more about "What's at Stake," and how Illinois hospitals are not only delivering lifesaving care but also strengthening our state's economy and local communities every day.

About IHA

The Illinois Health and Hospital Association, with offices in Chicago, Naperville, and Springfield, advocates for Illinois' more than 200 hospitals and nearly 40 health systems as they serve their patients and communities. IHA members provide a broad range of services—not just within their walls, but across the continuum of healthcare and in their communities. Reflecting the diversity of the state, IHA members consist of nonprofit, investor-owned and public hospitals in the following categories: community, safety net, rural, critical access, specialty, and teaching hospitals, including academic medical centers. For more information, see team-iha.org. Like IHA on Facebook. Follow IHA on X (formally known as Twitter).

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