Local PPE Production Expands; State Offers Enterprise Contract to Hospitals

The Arizona Commerce Authority and Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) are working with Arizona vendors to expedite local production of personal protective equipment (PPE). ADOA has offered to help secure statewide contracts for large orders that are aligned with vendors’ production schedules. Arizona hospitals will be able to leverage the state’s purchasing power through a cooperative agreement. The first step is filling out a short survey we will send out through AzCHER staff. Responses to the survey are due by close of business on April 3, 2020. For more information, contact Shawna Murphy at smurphy@azhha.org.

Nursing Board Issues Temporary Waivers

The Arizona Board of Nursing last week approved an Emergency Declaration permitting temporary licensing waivers that will

- allow all qualifying individuals licensed or holding a certificate and in good standing in another state to begin practicing in Arizona if granted Board approval.
- allow expired Arizona licensees and certificate holders who do not have prior discipline or safety concerns but have not met their practice hours requirements recently (within five years) to renew their licenses and certificates to provide needed services.
- provide waivers for educational programs to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by allowing programs under the Board’s jurisdiction to apply for a waiver to substitute online teaching for in-person teaching, and substitute direct patient care clinics/instruction with simulations during the State of Emergency, to minimize transmission of COVID-19 between students and patients. This is a temporary process to assist in addressing the state of emergency.

The process for applying for a temporary license is on the Arizona State Board of Nursing website and can be accessed HERE.

SDMAC Approves Additional Crisis Standards of Care Recommendations

The State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) met today and approved recommendations on hospital staffing plans, prehospital triage protocols and implementation crisis standards of care at short term acute care hospitals. The Arizona Department of Health
AzHHA and AzCHER hospital member alert – COVID-19

Services will post the recommendations within the next couple of days, and AzHHA will provide a link at that time. The Committee also discussed primary, secondary and tertiary triage, and we anticipate recommendations on these to be adopted at the next SDMAC meeting.

Alternate Care Site Planning Underway

ADHS convened the Joint Alternate Care Planning Task Force today to discuss plans for converting the shuttered St. Luke’s Medical Center into an Alternative Care Site providing ICU level of care to COVID-19 patients. Staffing discussions are still underway. In addition, the state plans to roll out large low-acuity step-down alternative care sites in Maricopa, Pima and Coconino counties. ADHS acknowledged the need to address overflow and step-down capacity and in rural areas, which some counties are working already on. Target locations for rural ACSs might be available hotel space. AzHHA and AzCHER staff will be reaching out to members to discuss their needs and local planning efforts.

Mass Fatality Planning

The Statewide Fatality Management Task Force met today to begin preparing for a surge in fatalities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. ADHS is working to better understand regional capacity, and has asked AzCHER Regional Managers to collect the following information from hospitals:

- What is the hospital’s current capacity for handling human remains, and is there a backlog?
- What are the protocols around managing a backlog?
- What needs do hospitals have regarding fatality management?
- How are hospitals handling religious and cultural needs, especially from tribal persons?
- Have any refrigerated trucks or other external storage mechanisms been requested or acquired? If not, do you anticipate needing additional cold storage?

COVID-19 Updates

Ensure your hospital response team is on AzHHA’s COVID-19 member advisory distribution list. Visit our website https://www.azhha.org/covid19 and sign up to receive future member advisories and COVID-19 updates.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic status, AzHHA is sharing its member advisory with all Arizona hospital and healthcare partners to get you the information you need to care for patients in your communities.

Questions? Contact us at Communications@AzHHA.org.