AzHHA MEMBER ADVISORY

COVID-19

Congressional delegation meetings

AzHHA members held a conference call with members of the congressional delegation and staff yesterday to discuss the increase in COVID-19 related hospitalizations. Issues discussed included hospital capacity, border surge, integrating post-acute care hospitals into medical surge response, contingency and crisis standards of care, data reporting and testing constraints. Members also discussed the vital need to have flexibility in managing their own resources when it comes to deciding whether to close or open non-emergency surgeries. With COVID-19 cases on the rise again, AzHHA will continue to evaluate the best process for convening members with public health representatives, policymakers and other partners.

HHS distributing $10 billion this week to safety net hospitals

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced Tuesday it will distribute $10 billion from the CARES Act’s Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund to safety net hospitals serving high numbers of Medicaid and uninsured patients. Specifically, eligible hospitals are those that have a Medicare Disproportionate Payment Percentage of 20.2% or greater, average uncompensated care per bed of $25,000 or more and profitability of 3% or less as reported to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in the most recently filed cost report. Eligible hospitals will receive a minimum distribution of $5 million and a maximum distribution of $50 million this week via direct deposit.

HHS announces $15 billion for Medicaid and CHIP providers that have not received provider relief fund general distributions

HHS expects to distribute approximately $15 billion to eligible providers that participate in state Medicaid and CHIP programs and have not received a payment from the $50 billion Provider Relief Fund General Allocation. The initial General Allocation provided payments to approximately 62 percent of Medicaid and CHIP providers; this distribution will make funds available to the remaining 38 percent. The payment to each provider will equal at least 2 percent of reported gross revenue from patient care. Providers will report their annual patient revenue via an enhanced Provider Relief Fund Payment Portal that HHS is launching tomorrow.

HHS announces an additional $10 billion for hospitals in COVID-19 hotspots
AzHHA and AzCHER hospital member alert – COVID-19

HHS sent a communication to hospitals yesterday requesting updated information on their COVID-19 positive inpatient admissions for the period January 1, 2020, through June 10, 2020. This data will be used to determine a second round of funding to hospitals in COVID-19 hotspots. **Submissions must be made by 9 p.m. ET on Monday, June 15.** HHS has posted [FAQs](https://hhs.gov) (beginning on page 26) that answer a number of questions about the funding.

For updated information and data on the Provider Relief Fund, visit [hhs.gov](https://hhs.gov/providerrelief).

**HRSA Updates Guidance on COVID-19-Related 340B Hospital Outpatient Sites**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) on June 4 updated its guidance related to COVID-19 for 340B hospitals registering outpatient sites. HRSA also posted a COVID-19 FAQ on 340B hospital eligibility criteria. In this FAQ, HRSA notes it does not have the authority to waive current law 340B eligibility criteria. The AHA has advocated for greater flexibility in administering the 340B program during the COVID-19 public health emergency, including waiving the 340B hospital eligibility rules.

**US Senate hearing on medical supply chain**

Today, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs convened a hearing to examine the federal government’s procurement and distribution of medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Representatives from the Administration, including Assistant Secretary of Health Admiral Brett Giroir, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Peter Gaynor and Vice Director of Logistics Rear Admiral John Polowczyk testified about the efforts to acquire critical personal protective equipment (PPE) through Project Air Bridge, and the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

**HELP Chair releases pandemic white paper**

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) yesterday released a white paper, “Preparing for the Next Pandemic.” The white paper discusses lessons learned from past federal government preparedness efforts, including legislation and funding, and offers initial recommendations for Congress to consider “this year” as it crafts public health preparedness legislation.

**New CMS guidance on “Reopening Healthcare Facilities”**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on Tuesday released new guidance to providers in supporting the administration’s initiative to continue reopening healthcare facilities in the U.S. As CMS notes, the recommendations apply only to those providers within areas in Phase II of reopening. With Arizona experiencing an increasing number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations on the rise in several areas of the state, it remains uncertain as to when this guidance will be applicable to Arizona or regions therein.
AzHHA and AzCHER hospital member alert – COVID-19

In Tuesday’s announcement, CMS also included a guide tailored to beneficiaries as they consider whether to begin receiving care in-person. The guide outlines the following considerations for patients to consider:

- Do not postpone necessary care;
- When it is safe to visit the hospital;
- Consider telehealth or virtual visits;
- What to expect when seeking care in person and
- Whether to get tested before seeking care in person.

#MaskUpAZ

As Arizona COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations increase, it is important to remember the basics of working to stop the spread. AzHHA has partnered with the Flinn Foundation to promote their Mask Up initiative. We encourage you to help us amplify this important message on social media using the hashtag #MaskUpAZ.

Wearing a mask in public lowers the chance of spreading #COVID19 through speaking, coughing, or sneezing. My mask protects you, and your mask protects me. #MaskUpAZ

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 in an effort to get you the information you need to care for patients in your communities.

Questions? Contact us at Communications@AzHHA.org.