



IHA Daily Briefing: March 24

Friday, March 24, 2023

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HFS Urges Provider Use of 'Ready to Renew' Toolkit

The Illinois Dept. of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) issued a [provider notice](#) urging providers to use the Department's "[Ready to Renew Messaging Toolkit](#)" during interactions with Medicaid customers.

The Department is preparing for the process of beginning Medicaid redeterminations for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began. To ensure these individuals remained covered, the Department has created this messaging toolkit to assist providers and prevent Medicaid customers from losing coverage.

IHA members are encouraged to visit IHA's COVID-19 public health emergency sunset webpage by [clicking here](#), to access frequently updated information and resources for healthcare providers.

U.S. House Subcommittee Hearing Focuses on Health Costs

Yesterday, the U.S. House Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Health held its first hearing of the 118th Congress, focusing on healthcare costs and their impact on patients and small business.

Chairman Vern Buchanan (R-FL) opened the hearing by noting the thirteenth anniversary of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and connecting its passage to an acceleration of healthcare costs and increased federal bureaucracy. Ranking member Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) praised the ACA in his opening remarks, noting that the law significantly expanded access to health coverage. Rep. Danny Davis (IL-7), who serves on the subcommittee, said efforts to chip away at the ACA would harm small businesses and their employees.

The hearing, entitled, "Why Health Care is Unaffordable: The Fallout of Democrats' Inflation on Patients and Small Businesses," covered a myriad of health issues, including hospital consolidation, which was cited several times as a key driver of higher costs. Witness Patricia Kelmar, Senior Director of Health Care Campaigns, U.S. Public Interest Research Group, told the subcommittee, "With the consolidated health markets we're seeing prices just skyrocket, and there's no ability for insurance plans to be able to shop around and find another alternative when [a] community has only one consolidated health system demanding the same prices throughout. So we really have to get to the cost issue to make sure that health insurance programs [are] paying reasonable prices and not inflated prices."

The American Hospital Association sent a [letter](#) to the subcommittee in advance of the hearing, highlighting hospital financial challenges. Witness statements are available [here](#), and a recording of the hearing is [here](#).

REMINDER: RSVP for IHA's State Advocacy Day by 4/3

As we approach the mid-point of the General Assembly's spring legislative session, it is imperative that legislators hear directly from the hospital community and IHA with our key messages and top advocacy priorities—particularly the critical need for lawmakers' support of our top legislative priority for 2023: the first General Revenue Fund Medicaid base rate increase for hospitals in 28 years.

As part of our ongoing advocacy efforts, IHA will hold a Hospital Advocacy Day in Springfield on Wednesday, April 19 where you can meet face-to-face with your legislators.

Please RSVP by April 3 by [clicking here](#) so IHA can arrange meetings with your legislators. For scheduling purposes, please indicate on the form which state legislators you would like to meet with and the order of your preference.

IHA will hold a briefing for hospital leaders at 7:30 a.m. on April 19 at The Sangamo Club (227 E. Adams St., Springfield). A limited block of rooms has been held at the Statehouse Inn (101 E. Adams St., Springfield) for Tuesday, April 18.

[Contact us](#) with questions.

HRSA Launches Organ Procurement, Transplant Modernization Plan

This week, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS), announced its new [Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network \(OPTN\) modernization Initiative](#).

According to a [news release](#), the new data dashboard shares de-identified information on organ donors, organ procurement, transplant waitlists, and transplant recipients. HRSA says patients, families, clinicians, researchers, and others can use this data to inform decision-making as well as process improvements.

The announcement also included HRSA's plan to strengthen accountability, equity, and performance in the organ donation and transplantation system. HRSA says this iterative plan will specifically focus on five key areas, including technology, data transparency, governance, operations, and quality improvement and innovation.

To access more information about HRSA's OPTN Modernization Initiative, [click here](#).

Illinois COVID-19 Data

The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) is following the lead of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with weekly reporting of new COVID-19 cases and deaths. IDPH reports weekly data on Wednesday of each week for the previous week ending Sunday. IDPH will continue daily reporting of [ICU bed availability and hospital admission data](#).

Briefly Noted

As part of an ongoing national effort to target diet-related chronic diseases and improve Americans' health through improved nutrition, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued [draft guidance](#) today providing food manufacturers with recommendations on how and when to use Dietary Guidance Statements on the label of food products. The guidance seeks to ensure label statements promote good nutrition, provide greater consistency in labeling, and assist consumers in making informed choices. Diet-related chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S. and disproportionately impact communities of color and people living in rural areas, according to the FDA.

Data from over 1 million people revealed shared genetic markers across substance use disorders—regardless of the substance being used—according to findings of a new study co-funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). A NIMH [press release](#) said the research also found the genomic pattern predicts a higher risk of mental disorders, underscoring the importance of aligning treatment of substance use and mental disorders to achieve more effective treatment.