

March 18, 2020

Members of Congress are currently drafting a third COVID-19 response bill, which is expected to pass in the coming days. IHA is urgently requesting that direct funding and support for hospitals and health systems be included, among other priorities.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** Please urge your Representatives and Senators to include direct funding and support for hospitals in the third COVID-19 response legislation. Illinois hospitals are on the front lines of this public health emergency and must have a direct infusion of funds to remain viable and combat this public health emergency, and preserve \$365 million in weekly pay and benefits for frontline healthcare workers as hospital revenues plummet.

To look up your Senators' and Representatives' contact information, [click here](#) and fill in your local information in the "Find Politicians" box. To send email messages to your members of Congress, [click here](#).

**TIMING:** The U.S. Senate is expected to vote in the coming days. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced that the Senate will not adjourn until it completes work on a bipartisan bill. The U.S. House could call a vote within 24 hours of Senate passage.

Illinois hospitals are taking extraordinary and costly action to keep the public safe and care for patients, including preparing for and managing surge capacity, making infrastructure investments, purchasing equipment and supplies, managing the safety of the healthcare workforce, and meeting enhanced staffing needs.

#### Suggested Talking Points

- As Congress considers options to support industries that are negatively impacted by COVID-19, it is critical that hospitals are among the highest priority.
- Illinois hospitals and health systems are taking historic steps to cope with the stress being placed on them by the COVID-19 outbreak and are prepared to do whatever is necessary to deal with this unprecedented emergency.
- Significant and immediate funds are needed to ensure hospitals can continue to prepare for and manage surge capacity, purchase needed supplies, ensure the safety and continuity of the healthcare workforce and care for patients.
- Specific challenges and actions to date by Illinois hospitals and health systems include:
  - Significant increase in up front operating costs, from supply pricing increases, addition of new services and beds, drive-through testing sites, and preparing for surge capacity
  - Meeting enhanced staffing and workforce continuity needs by directing certain clinical staff to remain at home so they remain healthy and replace staff who become infected, continuing to pay "reserve" staff, and addressing childcare and other needs (under normal circumstances, total payroll (pay and benefits) for Illinois hospitals' workers is \$19 billion annually or more than \$365 million weekly)
  - Infrastructure investment, including containment infrastructure, such as tents or other temporary structures for screening and testing, retrofitting, acquiring or new construction of areas for isolation and surge management
  - Accessing equipment and supplies, including PPE, ventilators, respirators, medications and other supplies
  - Enhanced testing capabilities, including timely testing and results
- The Illinois Health and Hospital Association and the Illinois hospital community respectfully request Congress act expeditiously to provide direct funding and support for hospitals and health systems.
- Not only are Illinois hospitals critical to the health and wellbeing of all Illinoisans, they are also a vital job-creating sector of

the Illinois economy, generating an economic impact of more than \$100 billion annually and nearly a half million direct and indirect jobs.

- Illinois hospitals also support legislative requests made by IHA and the American Hospital Association. These include providing financial assistance for hospitals and offsetting the costs of uncompensated care, bad debt and charity care for treating COVID-19 patients.

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