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Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021

Today's headlines:

- [Telehealth payment reimbursement meeting scheduled with Wellmark](#)
- [Gov. Reynolds outlines 2021 legislative priorities in address](#)
- [IHA releases latest hospital data trends](#)
- [Survey finds physicians are key to COVID-19 recovery](#)

Telehealth payment reimbursement meeting scheduled with Wellmark

Wellmark has developed conceptual payment methodology and implementation/measuring criteria for providers of telehealth. To ensure members are fully educated on the concept, IHA is scheduling an all-membership call for **9:30 am Tuesday, Jan. 19**. Wellmark representatives will present the payment methodology and members will have the opportunity to offer their thoughts.

Throughout the pandemic, hospitals have relied on telehealth as a safe platform to provide and

maintain patient care. With member input, IHA has been advocating strongly for telehealth payment parity to maintain and advance this vital service. Besides developing potential payment criteria, Wellmark is extending payment parity for virtual services until at least June 30.

IHA members are urged to attend this important meeting to learn about the Wellmark methodology and help guide IHA's response to this proposal. Click [here](#) to register.

Gov. Reynolds outlines 2021 legislative priorities in address

Tuesday night, Gov. Kim Reynolds presented her annual condition of the state address in the Iowa House chamber. The governor began her remarks by showing gratitude to health care workers.

"In 2020, you worked some of the longest hours, in the most uncertain conditions," Gov. Reynolds said. "Your actions saved lives. Your spirit inspired us."

She also highlighted several of IHA's key priorities including:

- Emergency medical services.
- Mental health funding.
- Telehealth.

Additionally, she covered other issues important to hospitals such as Future Ready Iowa and broadband internet. IHA appreciates the governor's recognition of the importance of health care in Iowa and looks forward to working with her on these initiatives. These issues will be further clarified in IHA's Legislative Bulletin. For more information and to receive IHA's Legislative Bulletin, email [Erin Cubit](#) at IHA.

IHA releases latest hospital data trends

IHA has collected Iowa hospital data trends for the COVID-19 pandemic period of March-November 2020 as compared with the same months in 2019. For this report, 92 Iowa hospitals reported data:

- Acute discharges decreased 13.3% as acute patient days decreased 5.3%.
- Ambulatory surgery visits (hospital-based) decreased 19.1%.
- Average length of stay increased 9.3%.
- Births decreased 6.9%.
- Charity care decreased 12.2%.
- Emergency department visits decreased 20.7%.
- Facility employment (excluding physicians) has decreased 4.1%.
- Inpatient admissions from the emergency department decreased 7.7%.
- Inpatient surgeries decreased 22%.
- Medicaid acute discharges decreased 11.5% and Medicaid acute patient days decreased 6.6%.
- Net patient revenue (collected charges) decreased 5.1%.
- Outpatient utilization decreased 8.7%.
- Total expenses have increased 2.2%.
- Uncompensated care (bad debts) decreased 17.3%.

Email [Allison Martin](#) at IHA with any questions.

Survey finds physicians are key to COVID-19 recovery

ServiShare partner Merritt Hawkins, along with The Physicians Foundation, has tracked how COVID-19 affected physicians in 2020 with three national surveys.

The surveys examined how the coronavirus affected physicians financially, how it has changed their practice plans and patterns, and how it affected their mental and physical well-being. The surveys also studied how physicians think COVID-19 and other challenges facing health care professionals should be addressed. Click [HERE](#) for a brief, two-page synopsis of the survey.

Iowa Hospital Association members who would like the complete, 54-page report on the findings of all three surveys can email Merritt Hawkins' Senior Marketing Consultant [Brandon Schumacher](#).

NewsStand

Iowa news

- [More than 90K Iowans get at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Broadlawn's CEO Jody Jenner, who led public hospital's resurgence, to retire after 15 years](#)
- [Genesis Safe at Home keeps many COVID-19 patients out of hospital](#)

National news

- [Balancing tech and patient care in telehealth: A case study with CallOnDoc](#)
- [Three big problems and three possible solutions to vaccine rollout](#)
- [COVID-19 is mutating. What does that mean for us?](#)

Click [HERE](#) to read all of NewsStand.

Upcoming events

- [Nurse Manager Leadership Workshop](#): Thursday, Jan. 14-Friday, June 11.
- [Iowa Hospital Auxiliaries and Volunteers Virtual Speaker Series](#): Wednesday, Jan. 20-Wednesday, Feb. 17.
- [Roundtable: Thriving Through a Pandemic](#): Thursday, Jan. 21.
- [Advanced Leadership Academy](#): Thursday, Jan. 21-Thursday, Nov. 11.
- [Protecting the Employee: Hospital's Responsibilities during COVID](#): Wednesday, Jan. 27.
- [COVID-19 and Most Favored Nation Model for Pharmacies](#): Thursday, Jan. 28
- [Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement Program](#): Tuesday, Feb. 16.
- [Physician Business Leadership Certification Program](#): Tuesday, Feb. 23-Tuesday, Aug. 10.
- [Wage Index: Strategies and Trends in Iowa](#): Thursday, Feb. 25.
- [Iowa Rehabilitation Managers Virtual Spring Conference](#): Thursday, March 4.
- [Common Life Safety Code Deficiencies](#): Tuesday, March 16.



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