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Register: Hospital Board Succession Webinar on March 28

As a hospital's governing body, the board of trustees has a prominent role in helping achieve long-term hospital goals and policies and in assisting with strategic planning and decision-making. But what skills and knowledge do trustees need to be successful? And how can you ensure seamless board transition?

A March 28 webinar offered to IHA members, "[Taking Care of Board Business: A Plan for Successful Board Succession](#)," will answer those questions and more. The 2-3 p.m. webinar is designed for hospital and health system trustees and administration leaders who work with them.

During the program, former healthcare executive Tracy Warner will:

- Guide you in developing a seamless transition plan that positions the board and healthcare organization for success;
- Discuss the strategic nuances of board succession planning; and
- Provide practical tools and insights essential for effective implementation.

Warner has over 30 years in association and hospital leadership roles, and she currently leads the consulting firm Board Business as founder and CEO. Her firm helps rural hospital boards create efficient and effective governance processes that allow for focused strategy discussions and optimal decision-making for organizational sustainability.

The webinar is offered through the Iowa Hospital Association. IHA members will get an unlimited number of connections for the \$195 registration fee per organization within the same hospital or health system corporate office. The webinar will be recorded and made available to all registrants following the program. [Register today.](#)

[Contact us](#) with questions.

State Offers Hospital Testing of BEACON Portal

As a follow-up to IHA's [Jan. 18 memo](#) on state notices and resources to aid in hospital boarding, there is a new opportunity for hospital staff involved in youth placement in behavioral health settings to volunteer as a user tester for the state's [Behavioral Health Care and Ongoing Navigation \(BEACON\) service access portal](#) for Illinois youth. Hospital staff currently input over 20% of youth applications within the pilot portal, while 45% of youth in the portal itself are currently in a hospital setting. User input is central to the BEACON development process. Throughout the project, there will be multiple user testing opportunities, in order to shape the final application.

Leadership from Illinois' Children's Behavioral Health Transformation initiative will hold a series of testing engagements that will include a one-hour demo by Google, followed by an asynchronous assignment with specific instructions for what to test and a questionnaire about the experience. Overall, it is an estimated time commitment of about two hours. The testing groups will take

place from March through June, and you can volunteer to be a tester by signing up [here](#). Specific dates, testing topics and user groups are below.

Date	Testing Topic	User Groups
March 15	Public Portal Workflow	Parents, Providers and Other Users
April 12	Agency Portal Workflow	State Agency Staff and Partners
May 10	Systems Integration	SPIDER Staff and Illinois Dept. of Children and Family Services Data Warehouse Staff
June 7	Reporting/Data	Legislators, Agency Leadership and Public Partners

Study: Hospital Staff Experience Workplace Aggression Every 40 Hours

Hospital staff are exposed to 1.17 aggressive verbal and/or physical events every 40 hours worked, according to a [study](#) published by *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*. The study examined the incidence of patient and visitor aggressive events toward patient care staff at five inpatient medical units in community hospitals and academic hospitals in the Northeastern U.S. The study was conducted over a 14-day period in early 2017. Many Illinois hospitals report that since the COVID-19 public health emergency began, violent interactions at healthcare facilities have increased in frequency and severity.

Notable findings from the study include:

- Study participants recorded a total of 179 aggressive events, with a rate of 2.54 aggressive events per 20 patient days.
- The number of aggressive events was greater during times when staff had significantly greater numbers of assigned patients.
- Patient verbal aggression was higher than physical aggression events, with the study finding two verbal aggression events per 20 patient days versus 0.85 physical aggression events per 20 patient days.
- The causes most precipitating the incidents included medication administration (18.6%), waiting for care (17.2%) and delivering food and/or drinks (15.9%).
- Slightly more than 75% of events were managed with verbal de-escalation.

In response to the increasing numbers of serious assaults and violence in local emergency departments and hospital settings, IHA strongly supports Senate Bill 1893. This bipartisan legislation provides security for Illinois' healthcare providers by clarifying that healthcare workers have the same protections in the law that those working in nursing homes, daycares and schools are currently afforded when assaults occur in those workplaces. The legislation includes violence against a healthcare worker in a healthcare setting as an aggravating factor a judge can consider during sentencing. [Click here](#) to view IHA's fact sheet on Senate Bill 1893.

Cybersecurity Advisory: Threat Actors Exploit Ivanti Vulnerabilities

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the FBI joined national and global partners last week to issue a joint [Cybersecurity Advisory](#) warning that cyber threat actors are actively exploiting vulnerabilities in Ivanti Connect Secure and Ivanti Policy Secure gateways. The advisory stressed a particular concern is that "cyber threat actors are able to deceive Ivanti's internal and external Integrity Checker Tool (ICT), resulting in a failure to detect compromise."

The organizations encouraged network defenders to:

- Assume that user and service account credentials stored within the affected Ivanti VPN appliances are likely compromised;
- Hunt for malicious activity on their networks using the detection methods and indicators of compromise within the advisory;
- Run Ivanti's most recent external ICT; and

- Apply available patching guidance provided by Ivanti as version updates become available. If a potential compromise is detected, organizations are directed to collect and analyze logs and artifacts for malicious activity and apply the incident response recommendations within the advisory.

COVID-19 Information

The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) has launched a weekly [Infectious Respiratory Disease Surveillance Dashboard](#) that will be updated weekly on Friday. This report provides the public with the latest data on hospital visits, seasonal trends, lab test positivity and demographic data.

[Click here](#) to visit the IDPH COVID-19 resources webpage. IDPH will continue to report the weekly number of people with COVID-19 admitted to hospitals from emergency departments, deaths and vaccinations, with COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus information also reported through the dashboard of the [Illinois Wastewater Surveillance System](#).

Briefly Noted

The U.S. government is suspending the program that allows Americans to order free COVID-19 tests, [AXIOS reported](#) Monday. According to the news outlet, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) is discontinuing the program due the reduction in cases following the winter respiratory season. HHS said that the program will be suspended as of March 8, but any orders placed on or before Friday will be delivered.

A single dose of the widely used antibiotic doxycycline taken after sex significantly reduced cases of chlamydia and early syphilis among certain populations in San Francisco over the course of a year, [according to](#) The New York Times. San Francisco city officials said that gay and bisexual men and transgender women who had a history of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or multiple sex partners were provided with a supply of the antibiotic and asked to take two 100-milligram pills within 72 hours of unprotected sex. This significantly cut the risk of STIs in these groups. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [reported](#) in January that syphilis rates have reached their highest numbers of infection since 1950.

Leading the News

Feds warn of rising threats against health care sector, doctors among assassination targets

ABC 7 [reported](#) (3/4) that, "U.S. Homeland Security officials are warning of a growing tide of threats and violence targeting hospitals, doctors and the full spectrum of health care properties and providers. The new warning from the Department of Homeland Security says health care institutions need to be on alert for 'malicious cyber actors [that] target the Healthcare and Public Health Sector for financial gain, cyber espionage purposes or ideological reasons.'"

Providers losing \$100M daily over Change Healthcare hack: Report

Becker's Hospital Review [reported](#) (3/4) that "Some larger health systems are losing more than \$100 million a day due to the Change Healthcare cyberattack, one cybersecurity firm estimated, causing industry associations to continue to urge action."

7 healthcare trends we're watching now

Becker's Hospital Review [reported](#) (3/4) that, "Margins for health systems improved in 2023 after a disastrous 2022. At the end of 2022, it looked like we would see massive health system failures. Systems rebounded in 2023 far better than many of us expected. The median hospital margin was -0.5% in January 2023 and 2.3% by year's end, according to Kaufman Hall."

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