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Gov. Pritzker Delivers FY 2025 State of the State/Budget Address

Today, Gov. JB Pritzker delivered his joint State of the State and Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Budget Address before the General Assembly, Illinois' constitutional officers and other government leaders. The Governor outlined a number of healthcare initiatives, including proposals targeting insurance companies' abuse of prior authorization to increase profits and delay treatment for patients.

Notably, Gov. Pritzker announced his intent to introduce a bill to curb predatory insurance practices, saying: "Doctors and their patients should be making decisions about patient care. There should never be an instance where an insurance company employee can deny coverage for something as serious as open heart surgery. We should never, ever, ever, ever cede those decisions to the whims of insurance executives whose focus is always on the bottom line. When it comes to patient care, the only bottom line that really matters is what needs to be done to keep people healthy."

A.J. Wilhelmi, IHA President and CEO, issued the following statement in response to the Governor's speech:

"The Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA) commends Gov. Pritzker for his continued support of Illinois hospitals and assuring access to quality healthcare for all Illinoisans, particularly those in our most vulnerable communities. We applaud the Governor's commitment to a strong healthcare delivery system, and to prioritizing the state's investment in the Illinois Medicaid program.

"IHA strongly supports the Administration's proposal to hold payers accountable for their conflicting, confusing and unnecessarily burdensome prior authorization practices. We wholeheartedly agree with Governor Pritzker that the practice of insurance companies denying and delaying critical care prescribed by a medical professional must be addressed so that patients are not put at risk. Studies show prior authorization delays and denials negatively impact patient care and contribute to healthcare worker burnout and overcrowding in hospital emergency departments. IHA supports commonsense prior authorization reform that would enhance access to healthcare and improve health outcomes.

"IHA looks forward to working with the Governor on his proposal to mitigate medical debt. Illinois' hospitals and health systems provide quality care to every patient who walks through their door, regardless of their ability to pay. Illinois hospitals have long supported comprehensive health insurance coverage with affordable cost-sharing that ensures widespread access to quality healthcare while protecting patients from medical costs that go uncovered by insurance plans.

"IHA looks forward to working together with Gov. Pritzker and the Illinois General Assembly to reduce barriers to healthcare, advance health equity, and ensure quality, compassionate care for all Illinoisans."

[Click here](#) to view a healthcare resource document. [Click here](#) to view the Governor's remarks, the [Fiscal Year 2025 state operating budget](#), [capital budget](#) and a [budget in brief document](#).

HNI Hosts Legislator Roundtable in Springfield

Health News Illinois ([HNI](#)) today hosted its 2024 Legislator Roundtable at Arlington's in Springfield. According to HNI, the event was an opportunity for legislative leaders to share the top health issues for the spring legislative session. Today's panelists included:

- Sen. Laura Fine, D-Glenview
- Sen. Dave Syverson, R-Rockford
- Rep. Anna Moeller, D-Elgin
- Rep. William Hauter, R-Morton

Panelists discussed healthcare staffing concerns, challenges with licensing delays, building a pipeline to strengthen the mental health workforce and the importance of prioritizing access to healthcare in Illinois. To get more information about HNI and its upcoming events, [click here](#).

Free Training for Military Community Suicide Prevention

The Illinois Dept. of Human Services is urging clinicians and healthcare workers to join the Illinois Governor's Challenge to prevent Suicide Among Service Members, Veterans and their Families. By completing courses tailored to your specific area of interest and becoming familiar with Military Cultural Competencies, healthcare workers can help prevent suicide among our military community. The training portal can be accessed at [Illinois SMVF \(psycharmor.org\)](#). Please direct any questions or comments to DHS.DMH.GC@illinois.gov.

APIC Offers Discount Code for IHA Members

In support of infection preventionists, the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) is offering a discount on an annual individual membership. To save \$30 on an APIC membership, members can complete the [online membership form](#) and enter the discount code 24ILHAS on the last page of the application before the payment screen. This offer is only valid online and applies to APIC Full/Active or New IP Memberships (U.S. only) and does not apply to APIC products or programs. This offer expires Dec. 31.

Cybersecurity Guide Helps Entities Implement HIPAA Security Rule

On Friday, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) published a final version of the [cybersecurity resource guide](#) (the "Guide") "Implementing the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Security Rule." The HIPAA Security Rule focuses on safeguarding electronic protected health information (ePHI) held or maintained by regulated entities. The Guide provides practical guidance and resources that can be used by regulated entities of all sizes to safeguard ePHI and better understand the security concepts discussed in the HIPAA Security Rule.

The Guide provides an overview of the HIPAA Security Rule; guidelines for covered entities and business associates to conduct a risk assessment; risk management guidelines; and considerations when applying the Security Rule. The Guide also includes appendices for small and large entities.

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](#).



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