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### IHA Meets with Pritzker Administration on New Arrivals, Workforce

Recently, Jordan Powell, IHA Senior Vice President, Health Policy and Finance, joined other industry representatives at a meeting hosted by the Governor's Office to provide an update on new arrivals who have received temporary protective status and are now able to work in the state of Illinois. To date, approximately 1,000 new arrivals are able to work in Illinois, and the Governor's Office believes 6,000-9,000 additional individuals will be eligible to work in the future.

During the meeting, the Administration encouraged employers interested in hiring new arrivals to visit [Illinois workNet](#), a website that connects directly with American Job Centers to coordinate job fairs and other outreach activities to help eligible new arrivals secure employment. IHA has been told that in Chicago and the surrounding region there are 10 American Job Centers specifically focused on the healthcare sector. IHA encourages members interested in hiring new arrivals to connect with American Job Centers.

### Webinar: Case Law Updates, National Patient Safety Initiatives

Healthcare organizations are coming under increasing pressure by states, the federal government, accrediting bodies and payors to more proactively identify adverse events and poor patient outcomes within their provider facilities. Once identified, the expectation, if not a requirement, is to investigate, analyze and take appropriate remedial steps to reduce future risks to patients and to improve the quality of patient care services. The failure to do so can and will have significant adverse financial, reputational and regulatory consequences.

Fortunately, the types of internal and external reviews, root causes analyses, studies, and investigations that are needed to achieve lower risks and better outcomes can be done within a privileged and protected space through an organization's active participation in a Patient Safety Organization (PSO). Whether you are a member of a PSO or not, it is important to understand the nuances of what is protected under PSO federal protections. Join IHA's Midwest Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) PSO and Attorney Michael R. Callahan, JD, Senior Counsel, Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP, on Feb. 7 from 1-2:30 p.m. CT for an insightful presentation on patient safety law.

This program is sponsored by the MAPS PSO, and is complimentary for all IHA and MAPS members, and for the counsel representing them. [Click here](#) for registration information, agenda detail and learning objectives.

This webinar will be particularly useful for in-house and external legal counsel, directors of risk management, and directors of patient safety and quality.

This program is approved to award Nursing Continuing Education and Minimum Continuing Legal Education for the live program only.

## FREE Webinar Series: MMRC Recommendations for Clinical Practice

The Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative is collaborating with the Illinois Dept. of Public Health in 2024 to create a series of webinars offered to outpatient care providers, as well as hospital teams and community organizations caring for pregnant and postpartum individuals, that align with the key recommendations of the [2023 Illinois Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Report](#). The goal of these webinars is to share the 2023 Maternal Mortality Review Committee's key recommendations to improve obstetric care and provide practical resources and strategies to support improvement efforts in obstetric care.

The first webinar is tomorrow, Feb. 2, from 12-1 p.m. CT and will focus on critical efforts to reduce maternal mortality related to substance use disorder, the leading cause of maternal mortality in Illinois. Presenters will share statewide resources to help link patients to treatment, ongoing care coordination, and risk reduction strategies and opportunities to receive free Narcan kits for patients.

[Click here](#) to register for tomorrow's webinar.

## Workshop: Peer Support and Suicide Prevention

Peer support services specifically intended to contribute to suicide risk reduction are becoming more prominent in healthcare systems and community settings. Such services can be used to address barriers to receiving proven interventions, while also improving hope, connection, recovery and empowerment. Despite emerging research on the effectiveness and implementation of these models, there are research gaps that could lead to missed opportunities in optimizing them.

A free, two-day [virtual workshop](#) sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health will bring together experts in peer support suicide prevention to discuss relevant conceptual frameworks, recent advances in understanding what works and for whom, service settings, and service-user characteristics that inform intervention strategies across the crisis services continuum, digital and telehealth applications, considerations for youth, and equity considerations. The workshop will identify innovative advancements and areas that need additional research as the field moves forward.

The workshop is scheduled for Feb. 8, 10 a.m.-2:45 p.m. CT and Feb. 12, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. CT. [Click here](#) to register. You must register for each day separately in *order to attend both days of the workshop*. [Click here](#) to view the agenda.

## U.S. Syphilis Epidemic Continues to Climb

Data [released](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this week show that syphilis rates continue to escalate, reflecting an alarming 937% increase in the past decade.

The CDC said swift action is urgently needed to slow the curve. Cases of primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis—the most infectious stages of the disease—increased 10% in 2022 alone and 68% since 2018. Steady growth in P&S syphilis among women is fueling the congenital syphilis epidemic, threatening the health of babies. Building on a decade of increases, reported congenital syphilis cases increased 31% in just one year, from 2021-2022. Tragically, these infections resulted in 282 stillbirths and infant deaths in 2022.

The data show racial and ethnic minorities continue to be disproportionately affected. The highest number of cases occurred among those who are Black or African American, Hispanic and Latino, and White. American Indian or Alaska Native people experienced the highest rate of congenital syphilis—for every 155 births in 2022, there was one congenital syphilis case. Black or African American people experienced about 30% of congenital syphilis cases in 2022. As disparities persist among some groups, it is evident that our nation must keep striving to address longstanding social inequalities that often lead to health inequalities and, ultimately, health disparities.

While reported syphilis cases continued to increase, reported chlamydia cases were level and reported gonorrhea cases declined by nearly 9% in 2022. Given this is the first drop in reported gonorrhea cases in at least a decade, the CDC said it is examining this finding closely and will be looking to 2023 data to better understand if this signals a true decline in infections, or if this is related to changes in gonorrhea diagnoses and reporting in 2022.

## 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 Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) is [celebrating](#) National Wear Red Day tomorrow, Feb. 2, and Heart Health Month throughout February by encouraging Illinoisans to get educated about cardiovascular disease and to take action to start living a heart-healthy lifestyle. IDPH is *Going Red in February* and urging all Illinoisans to take advantage of programs that focus on cardiac health, including the Department's Illinois WISEWOMAN (Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation) Program.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is [warning consumers](#) not to purchase or use South Moon, Rebright or FivFivGo eye drops because of the potential risk of eye infection. FDA said these eye drops are unapproved drugs and should not be available for sale in the U.S. Patients who have signs or symptoms of an eye infection should talk to their healthcare provider or seek medical care immediately.

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