Pritzker Administration Provides $140 Million to Medicaid Providers on Front Lines of COVID-19 Pandemic

Press Release - Friday, September 25, 2020

Springfield - Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) announced the distribution of $140 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act payments to Medicaid providers to offset the costs of fighting the coronavirus pandemic. This first round of funding will help Medicaid providers cover COVID-19 related costs, such as hazard pay for direct care workers, personal protective equipment purchases, and other previously unbudgeted expenditures incurred.

"These healthcare centers and clinics, as well as our hospitals, our long-term care facilities, our physician groups, our ambulance providers, our behavioral healthcare services and all our essential workers in healthcare have been performing heroically on the frontlines of this pandemic since the very first patient showed up with COVID-19 - and they haven't stopped, despite months and months of grueling work and difficult circumstances," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "They are critical to the health of our people in normal times - and this pandemic has only elevated their importance. I'm proud to support them today and every day."

$58.8 million of the first wave of funding was specifically set aside for providers serving communities across the state that have had disproportionately higher cases of COVID-19 since the onset of the pandemic. Many Medicaid providers, like safety net hospitals and federally qualified health centers, will receive first-round CARES payments automatically. In the first round of funding, $68 million in payments went to long-term care facilities, $50 million to federally qualified health centers, and $23.5 million was distributed to safety net hospitals.

"I'm grateful we can help providers serving Medicaid customers during this pandemic," **said Theresa Eagleson, Director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services**. "While developing these systems, team HFS worked swiftly to design new funding methodologies for these unprecedented payments to ensure they went where they could have the most impact, including disproportionately affected areas that have been hit hardest by COVID-19."

After the Illinois General Assembly appropriated the funding, HFS immediately began preparing to distribute the first round of CARES payments in a fair, efficient manner. The Department established appropriate funding methods for different provider types while accounting for evolving federal guidance on the use of CARES Act funds.

These CARES payments from HFS come in addition to federal CARES Act funding that the Illinois Department of Human Services already distributed to many Medicaid provider partners. In addition, some partners have received funding directly from federal sources.

Future rounds of funding will require providers to complete an online application. Next week, HFS will launch an online portal that providers can utilize to apply for additional funding. For all recipients, the department will use newly established reporting measures to ensure all funds are accounted for and used to cover appropriate expenses under federal law.

Hundreds of federally qualified health centers across the state are providing critical services and care to communities of color, which have experienced higher case rates than other demographics. COVID-19 testing is available free of charge of all Illinois residents, regardless of insurance coverage or immigration status. Treatment for the virus is also available free of charge for uninsured and low-income Illinois residents. To find a testing site near you, go to **https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/testing-sites**.

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