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NorthShore CEO tested positive for COVID-19 • AbbVie funding field hospitals • Health care groups ask to up opioid production

J.P. Gallagher of NorthShore University HealthSystem was among the hospital network's first coronavirus cases, Crain's has learned.

JON ASPLUND  



NORTHSHORE CEO TESTED POSITIVE: One of NorthShore University HealthSystem's first COVID-19 patients was its CEO J.P. Gallagher. In an internal company memo updating staff on NorthShore's response to the outbreak, Gallagher said he was diagnosed several weeks ago after experiencing a mild fever. [READ MORE.](#)

NEW FIELD HOSPITALS PLANNED FOR CHICAGO: International Medical Corps, a nonprofit that provides relief during disasters, intends to establish at least one mobile field hospital in Chicago to address an expected surge in patients as COVID-19 spreads. AbbVie is funding the initiative. McCormick Place [has also turned](#) into a makeshift hospital. [READ MORE.](#)

HEALTH GROUPS ASK DEA TO OK MORE OPIOIDS: The American Hospital Association, American Medical Association and other provider groups are [urging the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency](#) to allow for pharmaceutical companies to increase the production of opioids to respond to the "spikes in demand for morphine, hydromorphine, fentanyl and other opioids because of the number of patients requiring ventilation."

HCSC JOINS THE RANKS OF PLANS THAT WILL WAIVE COVID CO-PAYS: Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Illinois' parent company Health Care Service Corp. has agreed to cover certain patients' out-of-pocket costs for COVID-19 treatments, following in the wake of several rivals. [READ MORE.](#)

AHA PRESIDENT ASKS INSURERS TO HELP KEEP HOSPITAL DOORS

OPEN: Rick Pollack, president and CEO of the American Hospital Association, asked the heads of six major insurance companies to essentially advance payments to hospitals during the COVID-19 crisis by allowing providers to opt-in to periodic or accelerated payments and by cutting back on administrative actions that delay payments. [More from Modern Healthcare.](#)

Another possible source of relief for hospitals comes from the Federal stimulus package. Large hospitals and health systems may be eligible for a piece of the \$500 billion corporate COVID-19 relief fund, but the money comes with strings attached—including limits on compensation for highly paid employees, [Modern Healthcare reports.](#)

CDC POSTS NEW ICD-10 CODE: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have posted the [official guidelines](#) for the new ICD-10-CM code which went into effect Wednesday and last through Sept. 30. The codes are meant to help capture and report surveillance data for coronavirus.

WILL TELEHEALTH BECOME NEW NORM POST-PANDEMIC?: At Midwest Orthopedics at Rush, doctors are among the many health care workers throughout the country using telehealth applications to keep themselves and their patients safe during the pandemic. Orthopedic surgeon Dr. Brian Cole, for example, began using telemedicine to hold post-op visits with patients, walking through the process of removing their own BandGrip dressings, which take the place of traditional sutures or staples, he said.

“Our patients like that they have an opportunity to avoid coming to the office again, especially given the relative risks.” Cole said. “They embrace it. Telemedicine will become more routine as an efficient means to evaluate patients.”

TESTING NUMBERS RELEASED: Around one in every five coronavirus tests administered in the state are coming up positive, according to new data. [READ MORE.](#)

ILLINOIS WANTS TO BE FIRST IN LINE FOR 5-MIN ABBOTT TEST: It appears that Abbott's five-minute coronavirus tests indeed are arriving in Illinois. The state has so far gotten thousands and expects tens of thousands more in coming weeks, [Crain's Greg Hinz writes.](#)

HOSPITAL LAB TESTING 700 PATIENTS DAILY: Alverno Laboratories, which provides lab services to a network of 35 hospitals in Illinois and Indiana, said in a statement that it is maintaining a daily testing volume of about 700 tests, with a turnaround time of 12 to 24 hours.

NEW GUIDELINES WAIVE HURDLES FOR SUPPLEMENTAL OXYGEN: The Chicago-based Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation is urging pulmonary disease patients, providers and oxygen suppliers to use new guidelines to enhance social distancing, which include waiving in-person testing and signatures for delivery requirements for supplemental oxygen.

ASTELLAS DONATES TO FIRST RESPONDERS: Northbrook-based Astellas Pharma US is providing up to \$2 million of new financial assistance to meet the urgent demand for resources to help patients, healthcare workers and first responders, the drugmaker said in a statement. The company is also a founding partner to the Illinois' COVID-19 Response Fund.

STATES RECEIVING TEMPORARY INCREASE IN MEDICAID FUNDING: States, including Illinois, will receive a temporary 6.2 percentage point increase to their percentage for allowable Medicaid medical assistance expenditures for which federal matching is paid. The increase runs from January 1 through the last day of whatever quarter the COVID-19 public health emergency ends, according to a statement.

R1 RCM COMPLETES SCI BUY: Chicago-based R1 RCM Inc., which offers revenue cycle management services to health care organizations, completed the acquisition of Seattle-based SCI Solutions, Inc, according to a statement. A previous announcement in January said the deal was worth \$90 million.