Dear Members:

As we enter this surge period of the pandemic in our region, I want to inform you and our Allied Members, Business Partners, and fellow associations/agencies that Healthcare Council is fully operational. In compliance with the governor’s order, the physical office is closed, and we are working remotely.

First and foremost, I want to recognize Andy Carter and Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania’s (HAP’s) Disaster/Emergency Response Team, led by Mark Ross, for their outstanding effort. Mark and team are regarded as the best in the state association world and we are in good hands!

Jane Montgomery is serving as our point person on COVID-19, taking assignment/lead from American Hospital Association (AHA) and HAP as requested, participating on all calls. She is focusing on patient care issues between acute, non-acute and post-acute members.

Pat Raffaele is working multiple leads to identify and secure personal protective equipment (PPE). She has found several legitimate alternative sources, forwarding contact information to our Supply Chain Professionals Committee.

Denis Lukes is working with Chief Financial Officers on a myriad of payment issues at the federal, state, and local levels. He provided the AHA with financial and utilization data in support of Period Interim Payment (PIP) strategies. We also released the Flash Survey on time.

It is important under these circumstances for our members to communicate and share best practices.
I have decided to extend the closure of the Conference Center through May 31, 2020. We will update you on reopening the Center as more information becomes available. All committee meetings scheduled for April and May will be virtual. We are implementing Zoom technology and hope to be operational soon.

All programming will be rescheduled for a later date. Please keep abreast of Healthcare Council activity through the website and C-Suite Newsletters.

Seven plus years ago, Healthcare Council merged its Emergency/Disaster Response Program with HAP as part of the Knowledge Center Strategy. Thus, our focus is to assess the pandemic’s impact on clinical, business, and financial operations today through the next 18 months and develop/implement pragmatic solutions to assure our members’ economic viability, and compliance with all rules and regulations.

Our purpose, mission, support and commitment to you has not changed. Our priorities and how we operate have. We will stay the course, continuing to be your trusted resource!

Stay safe!

A. J. Harper,
President

COVID-19 Information for Members

Healthcare Council is sharing the information below with members regarding COVID-19 reporting, as well as links for recommendations for conservation of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Jane Montgomery, Healthcare Council’s point person on information related to COVID-19, noted a reminder that acute care and long-term care providers should enter their bed utilization and essential elements of information (EEI) into the Knowledge Center. Acute care facilities need to enter their EEI information into the Knowledge Center three times a day and long-term care facilities need to enter their EEI daily. This information is used to help with surge planning and resource distribution.

In addition, Jane Montgomery shared the links below which have recommendations for conservation of personal protection equipment (PPE).

Recommended Guidance for Extended Use and Limited Reuse of N95 Filtering Face Piece Respirators in
Healthcare Council of Western Pennsylvania is a strategic partner with health care providers and affiliated organizations, enabling them to realize their mission while maintaining their status as economically viable entities.

Visit: [http://www.hcwp.org](http://www.hcwp.org)
Call: 1-800-704-8434

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### Second Quarter Flash Survey

Healthcare Council released the second quarter of the Flash Survey for Fiscal Year 2020 earlier this week. The survey shows continuing trends from the prior survey in indicators such as average operating margins and observation cases.

The survey, which covers the six-month period ending December 31, 2019, shows a continuing trend of low operating margins with 23 hospitals, or 38 percent of the reporting hospitals, showing a decline in operating margins compared to the same period last year.

For those hospitals under 100 beds (27 hospitals), the average operating margins were negative 2.79 percent. This continues the trend over the past 12 years for these hospitals.

The trend in observation cases continues with observation cases increasing more than 4 percent over the same period last year. Observation cases now comprise more than 29 percent of the combined inpatient and outpatient cases.

Healthcare Council will begin collecting data for the third quarter Flash Survey in mid-April.

For more information contact Denis Lukes.

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### Special Member Compliance Webinar

Healthcare Council is partnering with the law firm K&L Gates on a special “live” webinar for members titled: *Healthcare Compliance Considerations and Guidance During COVID-19 Crisis.*

The webinar will be held from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2020.

Sarah Carlins, a partner with K&L Gates, will lead the
webinar, which is designed for acute and non-acute providers.

The webinar will cover the following topics:

- Telemedicine Expansion-Navigating the Relaxed Rules and Regulations
- Post-Acute Providers-Lessons Learned and Suggested Best Practices
- Stark Waivers-Guidance on Eased Financial and Compliance Burdens
- HIPAA-Insight into Changing Compliance and Enforcement

The webinar is designed for compliance officers, privacy officers, chief operating officers, clinical leaders and other members of the C-Suite team. The webinar will include a “live chat” and will be recorded so it can be shared with members who cannot participate on the “live” webinar.

The webinar is offered to members free of charge, however, registration is required. Registration information will be sent to members soon.

For more information contact Pat Raffaele.

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**S-10 Deadline Extension and Schedule Review**

Healthcare Council reminds members that there is an extension for submitting documentation and records for the Medicare S-10 review. Hospitals now have until May 31, 2020, to submit the requested documentation and records to Novitas, the auditors for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Novitas agreed to extend the deadline in response to a request made on behalf of members by Healthcare Council’s Chief Financial Officer, Denis Lukes. To receive the extension, hospitals must request the extension from Novitas.

Many member hospitals are also participating in the Medicare S-10 schedule review conducted by the firm Arnett Carbis Toothman in partnership with Healthcare Council.

For more information contact Denis Lukes.

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**COVID-19 Waivers and Accelerated Payments Available**

Healthcare Council provided members with information about both accelerated payments and a broad array of waivers earlier this week.
Healthcare Council’s Chief Financial Officer, Denis Lukes, notes that many hospitals have already filed their applications for the accelerated payments available through Medicare. The hospitals that have already applied should start receiving payments from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as early as next week.

CMS notes that the expansion of this program is only for the duration of the public health emergency and applications must be made through the appropriate Medicare Administrative Contractor (MAC).

In addition, members received information on COVID-19 waivers. The waivers impact several areas including enrollment, billing, compliance, discharge planning, expansion of health services eligible for telehealth, expansion to off-site capacity, workforce-related waivers, and others.

For more information contact Denis Lukes.

**COVID-19 and Health Literacy**

The Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) is hosting a free webinar entitled *Clear Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic* on the ways health literacy may be impacting the response to COVID-19. The speakers will also share practical tips for communicating clearly during a public health emergency. The webinar will be held from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. on April 9, 2020.

The webinar will feature speakers Stacey Robinson, president of CommunicateHealth, Inc., and Eskarlethe Juarez, a health education associate for IHA.

To join the webinar visit the [IHA website](#).

For more information on Healthcare Council’s health literacy training and resources contact Hillary Holes.

**HCWP HR Webinar**


The webinar was designed for Healthcare Council member human resource executives.

To view the webinar, members can access the recording and download a PDF of the presentation slides from the [K&L Gates website](#).

For more information contact Jane Montgomery or Pat Raffaele.
Wage Index Data Scrub

Healthcare Council recently held a webinar for members participating in this year's Wage Index Data Scrub. The webinar was hosted by Healthcare Council and the information was provided by BKD, the firm conducting the data scrub.

For more information contact Denis Lukes.

Upcoming Member Meetings

All member meetings will be held via conference call. The dial-in information will be sent to each Committee prior to the call.

Supply Chain Committee

The Supply Chain Committee will hold a call on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. The call will focus on best practices and sharing of information on supply chain issues related to COVID-19. Registration and dial-in information was sent to members. For more information contact Pat Raffaele.

Fund Development Committee

The Fund Development Committee will hold its second call on Wednesday, April 8, 2020, from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The call will focus on best practices for fundraising during COVID-19. Registration and dial-in information was sent to members. For more information contact Pat Raffaele.

Long-Term Care Director of Nursing and Quality Committee

The Long-Term Care Director of Nursing and Quality Committee will hold a call from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 16, 2020. The focus of the call will be a discussion on COVID-19 strategies. More information will be sent to Committee members soon. For more information contact Jane Montgomery.

Accounts Receivable Committee

The Accounts Receivable Committee will hold a call from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on April 22, 2020. Committee members will receive more information in the near future. For more information contact Denis Lukes.

HR Survey Updates

Labor Turnover Report

The February Labor Turnover Report was sent to participating members this week along with the request
Long-Term Care Labor Turnover Report

The results of the Long-Term Care Labor Turnover Report will be sent to participating members next week. The report includes data from 26 facilities.

Collective Bargaining Report

The results of the Collective Bargaining Report will be sent to participating members next week.

Benchmark Survey

The request for data for the Benchmark Survey will be sent to members next week.

IDD Benchmark Survey

The request for data for the Benchmark Survey designed for Healthcare Council’s Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) members will be sent next week.

For more information on survey data collection contact Steve Forest. For more information on Healthcare Council’s HR Surveys contact Jane Montgomery.

Foundations Respond to COVID-19

Area foundations are offering opportunities to apply for emergency funding related to COVID-19. Below are links to some of the area foundations offering emergency funding. Even though each foundation has its own grant criteria and application process, Healthcare Council members may find this information useful.

- Pittsburgh Foundation
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- The Highmark Foundation also announced specific funding for several organizations.

For more information or to share information about other COVID-19 funding contact Pat Raffaele.

Other Information Of Interest

Opinion Editorial

Dean of Duquesne University’s School of Nursing, Mary Ellen Glasgow, shared her views on personal protective equipment and the role of the Defense Production Act in an opinion editorial which was published in the
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette earlier this week.

Dean Glasgow also serves on Healthcare Council’s Board of Directors.