

# The Employers' VOICE

STAY IN THE KNOW WITH THE **EMPLOYERS' FORUM OF INDIANA**

September 2021 | Issue 9

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## Welcome to the Fall 2021 issue of The Employers' Voice!

I hope everyone is enjoying the great outdoors. While we were looking forward to celebrating the Forum's 20th year anniversary with you in person at our upcoming September 17th All-Stakeholder meeting at the Eiteljorg Museum Ballroom, due to COVID-19 cases surging and our hospitals being full, we determined it safest for all to meet via Zoom. The day we all get together in person, I promise will be an absolute blow out as we'll have much to celebrate. I miss seeing all of you. I hope you and your families stay healthy and happy.

Noted in this issue: Forum initiatives update, 2021 legislative policy highlights, COVID-19 vaccine updates, new member spotlights, hospital quality rankings, interesting news articles, and more. Enjoy!

### **Gloria Sachdev**

President and CEO, Employers' Forum of Indiana

[Email Gloria](#)

## Forum Initiatives Update

### Forum Work Groups

Thank you to the 25 Forum volunteers who have been meeting monthly to address the following 3 work group charges. We look forward to hearing a report at the November 4th All-Stakeholder Forum meeting.

- Physician Payment Strategies
- Pharmacist Provider Status
- Hospital Value Website

### Hospital Value Dashboard

**Coming November 2021!** The Forum received a grant to develop a first of its kind Hospital Value Dashboard. We are partnering with Mathematica to create an interactive web-based tool for all to use. Data sources include RAND 3.0 hospital prices, CMS hospital quality scores, Quantros quality reliability scores, and NASHP hospital cost findings. Users will be able to create customizable graphics and reports at the hospital level. Data sources will be updated quarterly to include RAND 4.0 findings when available in March 2022.

## Assessing Hospital Price Transparency

We reviewed 119 Indiana Hospital web-based shoppable price transparency tools from the lens of a patient to assess how they compared to federal government requirements. Each hospital was scored out of 8 points. Each hospital executive was provided their score(s) along with feedback and an opportunity to make adjustments if they wished. The partnership has been terrific as most Forum recommendations were made. We have rescored hospitals and will publish the final report soon.

## All-Stakeholder Meetings

### Next All-Stakeholder Meeting

#### Hospital Price Estimator Tool, Bundled Payments, and Vaccine Hesitancy

September 17, 2021 | 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm ET

[View the Agenda](#)

*Registration details for the All-Stakeholder meetings are sent to registrants electronically. For questions, please contact [Sara Otte](#)*

Our next meeting will be held on November 4, 2021. Visit our [Meetings page](#) for an archive of past meeting materials and presentations.

## Policy Highlights

### [CMS Proposes Rule to Increase Price Transparency, Access to Care, Safety & Health Equity \(HHS Press Release\)](#)

CMS is proposing to set a minimum civil monetary penalty of \$300/day that would apply to smaller hospitals with a bed count of 30 or fewer and apply a penalty of \$10/bed/day for hospitals with a bed count greater than 30, not to exceed a maximum daily dollar amount of \$5,500. Under this proposed approach, for a full calendar year of noncompliance, the minimum total penalty amount would be \$109,500 per hospital, and the maximum total penalty amount would be \$2,007,500 per hospital.

### [Dr. Richard Feldman: Session falls short on health care bills \(IBJ\)](#)

Read a brief summary of Indiana's 2021 legislative session from Dr. Richard Feldman, a family physician, author, lecturer and former Indiana State Department of Health commissioner.

### [Governor Holcomb Makes Appointments to New APCD Board \(Press Release\)](#)

In August, the Governor made seven appointments to the new All Payer Claims Database Advisory Board. The Forum was a strong advocate for the APCD state laws in 2020 and 2021.

## [Final Approval of \\$575 Million Settlement with Sutter Health Resolving Allegations of Anti-Competitive Practices \(Press Release\)](#)

In August, a judge gave final approval for a landmark settlement that requires Sutter to pay \$575 million in compensation, prohibits anticompetitive conduct, and requires Sutter to follow certain practices to restore competition in California's healthcare markets.

### Special Feature: COVID-19

#### COVID-19 Vaccines

### [Biden announces sweeping new vaccine mandates for businesses, federal workers \(Washington Post\)](#)

President Biden announced sweeping new coronavirus vaccine mandates last week designed to affect tens of millions of Americans, ordering all businesses with more than 100 employees to require their workers to be immunized or face weekly testing. [Read President Biden's COVID-19 action plan.](#)

### [More than 150 Houston Methodist workers fired, resign over refusal to get COVID vaccine \(Modern Healthcare\)](#)

More than 150 employees at a Houston hospital system who refused to get the COVID-19 vaccine have been fired or resigned after a judge dismissed an employee lawsuit over the vaccine requirement. The case over how far health care institutions can go to protect patients and others against the coronavirus has been closely watched. [Read the full story on Modern Healthcare.](#)

### [CDC Recommends 3rd Vaccine Dose For Immunocompromised People \(NPR\)](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is officially recommending that people with weakened immune systems get a third shot of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. [Read the full recommendation and guidelines on the CDC website.](#)

### COVID-19 Vaccines in Indiana

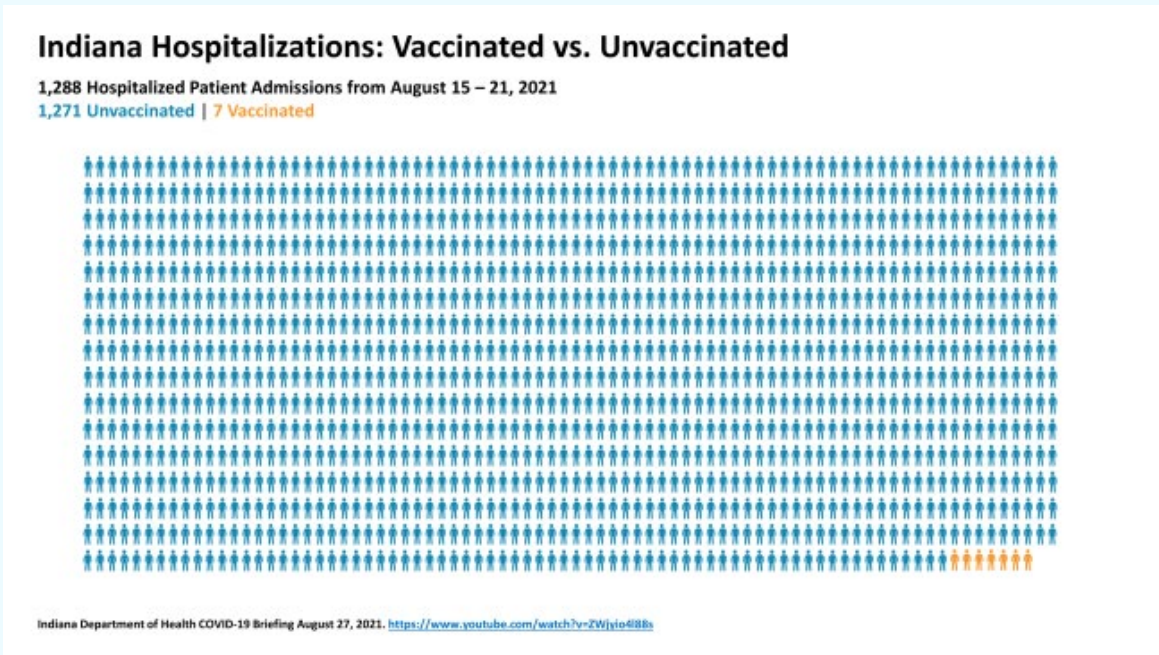
#### Vaccine Availability in Indiana

The vaccination of Hoosiers against COVID-19 continues to expand. Among those now eligible are any Hoosier age 12 and older. [Click here](#) to register or call 211 (866-211-9966) if you do not have access to a computer or need assistance. Please note that anyone [younger than 18 must receive the Pfizer vaccine.](#)

## Vaccine Hesitancy in Indiana

A [new study](#) from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention found that unvaccinated Americans are 4.5 times more likely to get infected, 11 times more likely to die, and 10 times more likely to be hospitalized, from COVID-19 than people who are fully vaccinated.

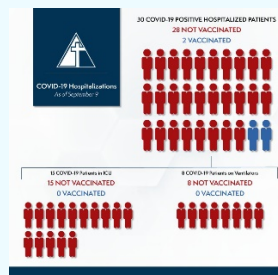
Currently in Indiana, 99.4% of COVID-19 hospitalizations, and 99.0% of COVID-19 deaths are among those who are not fully vaccinated. The image below, sourced from the Indiana Department of Health's August 27, 2021, COVID-19 Briefing, may help you to visualize the sobering reality of the situation.



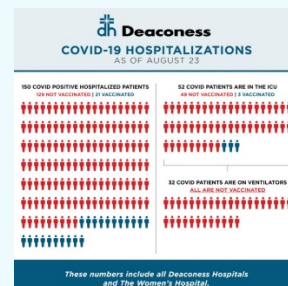
### Indiana Hospitals Visualizing COVID-19 Data by Vaccine Status

Similar graphics have been created by Indiana hospitals and hospital systems including Deaconess and Memorial Hospital and Health Care Center.

We strongly encourage all hospitals to develop similar graphics. Such graphics could be utilized by employers and others to share community level information.



**Memorial Hospital COVID Hospitalizations as of 9/9/2021**  
([Memorial Hospital Facebook](#))



**Deaconess COVID-19 Hospitalizations as of 8/23/21**  
([Deaconess News Twitter](#))

## Resources for Indiana Employers

### Employee Health Matters: [Debunking COVID-19 Vaccine Myths](#)

Myths are common when new vaccines come on the market. Instead of focusing on the positive truth that dangerous illnesses can be wiped out, myths based on fear and a lack of knowledge can cause people to reject safe and effective vaccines. The myths and facts listed in this document from the Form and the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalition (NAHCP) will help clear up false information.

### COVID-19 Dashboards

Find up-to-date data related to COVID-19 vaccines including vaccination rates, hospitalizations, breakthrough cases, and more.

- [Indiana COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard](#)
- [Regenstrief Institute COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- [KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthrough Cases: Data from the States](#)
- [New York Times Tracking Coronavirus in Indiana: Latest Map and Case Count](#)
- [Johns Hopkins University COVID Behaviors Dashboard](#)

### Schedule a Free On-Site Vaccination Clinic

Any school, business, or community group can request a vaccination clinic at no cost. For additional details or to request a clinic, visit the [Indiana Immunization Coalition website](#).

## Member Spotlights

### Meet Hardy Sikand

**Job Title:** CEO

**Organization:** Indiana Spine Group

#### Welcome to being a new member of the Forum! What made you decide to join?

Over the years I've seen the tremendous impact the Forum has had on local healthcare decision-making by leading employers. The advocacy on behalf of Forum members at the Statehouse has been impressive. As a mid-size employer and as a medical group, I want our organization to be an active participant in this much-needed process.



#### As a provider CEO, what are the top two changes you would like to see occur in our marketplace?

As a medical group, some relaxation of the tremendous overhead burdens placed on medical practices from payer organizations (i.e. pre-certification process, referral coordination, billing reviews, etc.). Annual growth in expenses, with no offsetting revenue increase on professional fees, lead to an unsustainable long-term business model. Second, further statewide growth in the direct-to employer/provider relationships. Such alignments will lead to enhancements in quality, cost, patient satisfaction metrics if properly structured.

#### What does your perfect Saturday look like?

Sleeping in just a little later than 5:00 am, trying to stay away from e-mail as much as possible (losing battle), but mostly time spent with family.

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## Welcome to Our Newest Members

We are pleased to welcome [Patoka Valley Health Care Cooperative \(PVHCC\)](#) and the [Indiana Spine Group](#), our newest Forum members! PVHCC is a southern Indiana-based corporation that represents 54 member companies, covering over 12,000 employees. Indiana Spine Group, headquartered in Indianapolis, IN, represents 28 providers practicing in 13 cities across Indiana.

## Congratulations

### Eskenazi Health Ranked #1 Hospital in Indiana in Charitable Care by Lown Institute

Congratulations to Eskenazi Health for being ranked #1 hospital in Indiana to provide charitable care. This analysis was conducted by the Lown Institute, who assessed nearly 2,400 private non-profit hospitals in the country by comparing each hospital's spending to the value of its their tax exemption. [See the full results.](#)

### CMS 5-Star Rated Indiana Hospitals for June 2021

Congratulations to the 13 Indiana hospitals who received a 5-Star CMS Rating in June 2021! [See the results.](#)

## In the News

### Employers

[An Employer-Provider Direct Payment Program Is Associated With Lower Episode Costs](#) (Health Affairs)

[Making Employer-Sponsored Insurance More Affordable](#) (Health Affairs)

[Contributor: Do Health Plans Have a Plan to Help Employer-Purchasers Get Better Value?](#) (AJMC)

[Large Self-insured Employers Lack Power to Effectively Negotiate Hospital Prices](#) (AJMC)

### Healthcare Industry

[Health Spending for 60-64-Year-Olds Would Be Lower Under Medicare Than Under Large Employer Plans](#) (KFF)

[Supreme Court upholds ObamaCare in 7-2 ruling](#) (The Hill)

[Profits swell when insurers are also your doctors](#) (Axios)

[Gov. Holcomb announces Governor's Public Health Commission Group to be led by former State Sen. Luke Kenley, former public health commissioner Dr. Judy Monroe](#) (Press Release)

[Hospitals and Insurers Didn't Want You to See These Prices. Here's Why.](#) (New York Times)

## Hospitals

['It would be a behemoth': Employer group raises concerns about proposed Spectrum-Beaumont merger](#) (Becker's Hospital Review)

[Lists: Largest Not For Profits in Indiana](#) (Indiana Business Journal)

[How the New Price Transparency Rules are Affecting Stakeholders](#) (Managed Healthcare Executive)

## Pharmacy

[States Probe Business Practices of Pharmacy Benefit Managers](#) (The Wall Street Journal)

[Walmart to offer own low-cost brand of insulin](#) (The Hill)

[Ohio pharmacists, care provider say program is a national model](#) (Ohio Capital Journal)

['It's creative and we certainly need the help': CVS, Walmart, Walgreens grow consumer presence with counseling services](#) (Becker's Health IT)

[Expanding Access to COVID 19 Therapeutics](#) (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services)

## Physicians

[AMA: Most physicians now work outside of private practice](#) (Modern Healthcare)

[Lutheran Health Network names new CEO](#) (Becker's Hospital Review)

[Physicians who post COVID-19 vaccine misinformation may lose license, medical panel says](#) (Becker's Hospital Review)

[Innovcare to Develop Primary Care Facility](#) (Inside Indiana Business)