



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
Healthcare and
Family Services

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Pritzker Administration Thanks Nurses for Their Service in Battling the COVID-19 Pandemic at the start of National Nurses Week

SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR), the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) wish to thank nurses in Illinois in recognition of the start of National Nurses Week for their dedication, commitment and selfless service during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are currently more than 230,000 nurses who hold Illinois licenses.

“Throughout the pandemic nurses have been on the frontlines – in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and doctor’s offices,” said **Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health**. “If there is a nurse in your life, whether a family member, friend, or the dedicated person who is caring for you when you need it most, please join me in taking this opportunity to say thank you to all those who work tirelessly to care for us.”

“So many nurses providing critical treatment has been truly essential, to not only the countless Illinoisans who trust their lives to their care, but the entire state as we continue to make progress in the fight against COVID-19,” said **Mario Treto, Jr., Acting Secretary of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation**. “To see so many run towards that fight is an inspiration to us all. We are thankful to have so many heroes among us.”

“Each day we are closer to ending this pandemic, and that wouldn’t be possible without the heroic efforts of our healthcare heroes,” said **Alicia Tate-Nadeau, Director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency**. “Nurses have given so much over the course of this last year, often times at great risk to themselves and their families. We salute your fearless dedication and devotion to your patients. ”

“For more than a year now, nurses have exemplified fortitude on the front lines of the battle against COVID-19,” **said Theresa Eagleson, Director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.** “We want to honor and thank them for their crucial work every day in providing care to Medicaid customers across Illinois, and especially for their tireless efforts during the pandemic.”

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Illinois took proactive steps to increase the number of health care professionals in the workforce. In March 2020, IDFPR issued a variance allowing Illinois nurses whose license status was inactive, non-renewed, or expired that also satisfy an additional set of specific criteria to restore their licenses temporarily during the pandemic.

In addition, IDFPR also issued a proclamation allowing out-of-state nurses to provide care to Illinois residents affected by COVID-19, as long as they obtained a temporary practice permit and followed other guidelines. Because of these actions, almost 9,500 additional nurses are now allowed to provide care in Illinois.

National Nurses Week was first observed in 1954 and, while the dates have changed throughout the years, the celebration of the contribution of nurses who serve our country by caring for its residents has not. This year, you can help nurses in the battle against COVID-19 by doing the following:

- Continue to take [preventative steps](#), including washing your hands and staying home when you're sick.
- Continue to follow [state guidance](#) regarding COVID-19, including on the [use of face coverings](#).
- Schedule and receive your COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you can. All Illinois residents 16 and older are eligible to receive the vaccine.

There are now more than 900 vaccination locations in Illinois open to the public, and these locations can be viewed online at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>. For those having difficulty navigating online services to make vaccination appointments, the Vaccine Appointment Call Center may be able to assist. This hotline is available seven days a week from 6:00 a.m. to midnight. Call agents' primary role is to help individuals navigate the various online registration sites. However, if the individual does not have access to online services or is unable to navigate the site, the call agent will make an appointment on the caller's behalf. The Vaccine Appointment Call Center phone number is 1-833-621-1284.