

# Report looks at hospital experiences with COVID-19

April 9 2020

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(HealthDay)—A report issued by the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services Office of Inspector General provides a national snapshot of hospital experiences in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The researchers collected information on hospitals' challenges and needs in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic based on brief telephone interviews conducted March 23 to 27, 2020, with hospital administrators from 323 hospitals.

According to the report, hospitals say that the most significant challenges related to testing and caring for patients with suspected or known COVID-19 and in keeping staff safe. Hospitals reported severe shortages of testing supplies and prolonged waits for test results; these issues limited a [hospital's](#) ability to monitor patient and staff health. Bed availability, supplies, and staffing were strained when patient stays were extended while awaiting test results. Additional challenges included anticipated shortages of ventilators, with hospitals reporting an uncertain supply of standard full-feature ventilators and use of alternatives to support patients. Shortages could pose [difficult decisions](#) about ethical allocation and liability. Hospitals described increased costs and decreasing revenues, which threaten their financial viability; ceasing elective procedures and other services reduced revenues, while costs were increasing in preparation for a potential surge of patients.

Hospitals report pressing needs for government assistance with five categories of action for meeting COVID-response challenges: (1) ensuring access to testing, supplies, and equipment; (2) workforce allocation, including reassignment of licensed professionals and realignment of duties; (3) capacities of facilities, including relaxed rules around bed designations and ability to establish surge facilities in nontraditional settings; (4) [financial assistance](#); and (5) centralized communication and public information.

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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Citation: Report looks at hospital experiences with COVID-19 (2020, April 9) retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-hospital-covid-.html>

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