



March 16, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-222, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader McConnell:

The first emergency supplemental funding package for the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19), aimed at public health preparedness and response and the development of a vaccine was an important first step as our nation develops a comprehensive response to the growing threat of COVID-19. We have already seen the initial impact that COVID-19 presents to our homeland, including our nation's health, economy and social stability.

Hospitals, health systems, physicians and nurses throughout the nation are preparing for, and in nearly every state responding to, community spread of COVID-19. **As Congress considers developing an economic stimulus package, we urge you to ensure that it includes a comprehensive funding strategy to ensure that hospitals, health systems, physicians and nurses are viable and *directly* supported for preparedness and response.**

As health care providers on the front lines, hospitals, health systems, physicians and nurses are taking care of patients with COVID-19 and preparing for a potential outbreak in every community. Ensuring the safe care for patients, protecting health care professionals providing patient care, and supporting the health and safety of communities demand the combined efforts of the public health system, front line health care providers, and federal, state and local governments.

America's front line health care providers seek sufficient financial support for the following:

1. To quickly update, train staff on and implement pandemic preparedness plans to respond to COVID-19 in all health care settings.
2. Obtain scarce supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE), essential for protecting front line health care professionals and testing supplies.
3. Rapidly ramp up infection control and triage training for health care professionals in all health care settings, especially in light of growing supply chain shortages.
4. Provide housing, care and monitoring of patients who do not require hospitalization but must remain isolated to better ensure that hospital capacity is preserved for acutely ill patients who require hospitalization. This includes persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infections who experience mild to moderate symptoms and who are not able to care for themselves at home.
5. Construct or retrofit separate areas to screen and treat large numbers of persons with suspected COVID-19 infections. This includes construction of isolation facilities in or around hospital emergency departments to assess potentially large numbers of persons under investigation for COVID-19 infection.
6. Address the financial impacts of cancellations of elective surgeries and procedures due to shortages of PPE, other medical supplies and need to keep beds available for COVID-19 patients, as well as patient cancellations due to fear of COVID-19 in health care facilities. Such cancellations could have devastating financial implications for hospitals, physicians and nurses already at financial risk and may limit access to care.
7. Plan for, train on, and implement expanded telemedicine and telehealth capabilities to ensure that appropriate care can be provided to individuals in their homes or residential facilities when social distancing measures are used to reduce community spread of COVID-19.
8. Increase the numbers of patient care beds to provide surge capacity using temporary structures, such as temporary hospitals that are deployed in a pandemic.

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9. Cover the increased costs associated with higher staffing levels, backfilling staff when necessary (due to unavailable staff or greater need for staff) and special infectious disease units needed to care for patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

As schools and childcare facilities shut down during community spread of coronavirus, hospitals may need to provide alternatives so that physicians, nurses and other staff with young children can come to work. This step will be essential in ensuring adequate staffing for caring for the most seriously ill in our communities.

We are committed to maintaining a strong collaborative effort with all stakeholders to respond to the public health emergency that COVID-19 presents. **We respectfully ask that Congress provide additional supplemental emergency funding of at least \$1 billion during this critical window of time when we are able to best prepare and respond to this outbreak.** We also urge that supplemental funding not be offset by cutting other health programs.

We look forward to continuing to work with you during this critical time to protect the health of our nation.

Sincerely,

/s/

/s/

/s/

Richard J. Pollack
President and CEO
AHA

James L. Madara
Executive Vice President and CEO
AMA

Loressa Cole
Enterprise CEO
ANA