

March 18, 2020

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

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we are writing to express our support for the inclusion of provisions to immediately remove barriers to practice for providers as Congress considers a legislative package to deal with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It's more important than ever that we allow all healthcare providers to practice to the full scope of their training to ensure that we maximize the current healthcare workforce.

With the expectation that hospitals will soon be overwhelmed with cases of COVID-19 and facing a shortage of beds, equipment, and providers, it's imperative that we have as many providers working to the top of the scope to ensure the highest level of access to care we can.

We believe that the directives in Executive Order 13890 section 5 are an important guide for how Congress can remove unnecessary barriers to care. The order calls for "proposing a regulation that would eliminate burdensome regulatory billing requirements, conditions of participation, supervision requirements, benefit definitions, and all other licensure requirements of the Medicare program that are more stringent than applicable Federal or State."

Removing these barriers would increase access to care, while still ensuring the highest level of safety for patients. We have seen health systems across the globe that are under immense strain, and with healthcare providers being particularly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, we need to ensure that we have as many providers practicing at the top of their abilities to deal with this crisis as we can. This is particularly true for rural and underserved areas, where non-MD/DO providers tend to predominate and where the population tends to be older and more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19.

Removing these barriers to providers also aligns with CMS's Rural Health Strategy, which cited maximizing scope of practice for providers as one of its key recommendations in its report, "Reforming America's Healthcare System through Choice and Competition."¹ It also aligns with

¹ <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Reforming-Americas-Healthcare-System-Through-Choice-and-Competition.pdf>

recommendations from the New England Journal of Medicine², as well as other independent arbiters.

We know that Congress and the administration face incredible pressure to manage this pandemic. The members we represent, who are on the front lines of healthcare, stand ready to do everything we can to help. We urge Congress to move swiftly to remove barriers to their practice.

Sincerely,

American Academy of PAs
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Podiatric Medical Association
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

² Frogner, Fraher, Spetz, Pittman, Moore, Beck, Armstrong and Buerhaus. (2020) Modernizing scope-of-Practice regulations – Time to Prioritize Patients. *New England Journal of Medicine*.382;7.p591-593