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American Academy of Hospice
and Palliative Medicine
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Association of
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(PAHPM)

Social Work Hospice &
Palliative Care Network
(SWHPN)

Society of Pain & Palliative
Care Pharmacists
(SPPCP)

Supportive Care Coalition
(SCC)

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Chair
National Governors Association
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 267
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of the National Coalition for Hospice and Palliative Care (Coalition), we write to urge you to work with the nation's governors to ensure that community-based home care, hospice, and palliative care providers are given priority access to personal protective equipment (PPE). Priority access to PPE will enable these community-based care providers to continue caring for elderly and sick Americans safely in their home and keep these providers and the caregivers on the frontline safe from exposure to COVID-19 while minimizing the risk of community spread. Hospitals are relying on a functioning home based health care system so they can reserve hospital beds for the sickest COVID-19 patients receiving critical care. Access to PPE is a critical issue for our community providers because much of our care is provided in a patient's home or in the vulnerable hospice care setting, and most equipment cannot be reused when the caregiving staff care go to another home to provide services. PPE for community-based providers' needs include the following: isolation gowns, masks (including n95 respirators and surgical masks), face shields and goggles, and medical grade gloves.

A recent announcement from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) declared that the delivery of healthcare services are considered essential "to help State and local officials as they work to protect their communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security." The Coalition recognizes that State governments are ultimately in charge of implementing and executing response activities in communities under their jurisdiction, while the Federal Government is in a supporting role. This is why it is imperative, in your role as Chair of the National Governors Association, that you communicate to the governors in writing the importance of access to PPE for providers outside of the hospital setting. Essential health care is being performed daily both inside *and* outside of the hospital setting, yet health care workers in the community are not being given equal access to PPE, despite being deemed essential by CISA.

Additionally, we encourage you to develop draft cooperative agreements which can be provided to hospitals to help ensure they share federally sourced PPE with community-based providers. Hospitals are increasingly looking to community-based providers to care for more patients outside the hospital setting as appropriate, which both allows for better care and frees up needed hospital beds. However, hospitals are not providing these community-based providers with the PPE needed to protect both the patients and health care workers. As you know, a majority of the federally distributed PPE goes directly to hospitals and not community-based providers. We urge you to examine establishing cooperative agreement between hospitals and community-based providers the help ensure that the critically needed PPE follows the patients out of the hospital setting upon discharge and into community-based care settings.

The Coalition thanks you for considering our requests to support all health care front line workers, both inside and outside of the hospital, and the vulnerable patient populations that we care for during this very challenging time. We commend your efforts and look forward to continuing to work closely with you to combat and hopefully soon win the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. If the experts within our Coalition can be of service to your association or directly to any of the state governors during this critical time in our nation's history, please do not hesitate to contact Coalition Executive Director, Amy Melnick at amym@nationalcoalitionhpc.org or 202-306-3590.

Members of the Coalition

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Society of Pain and Palliative Care Pharmacists
Supportive Care Coalition

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