March 26, 2020

To the Members of the General Assembly:

The undersigned organizations request your leadership in establishing a Healthcare Coronavirus Emergency Response Fund to provide expeditious and comprehensive support to front-line providers as they address this unprecedented public health emergency.

The worldwide outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is placing an enormous strain on the Commonwealth and the residents of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania providers are at the center of the response, working around the clock to execute preparedness protocols and provide care.

We request your prompt action in aiding Pennsylvania providers—including all of the providers, entities, and organizations represented by the below signatories—in addressing this crisis. This includes significant and direct allocation of financial resources to support health care and human service workers on the front line.

This support is vitally important as we grapple with maintaining an adequate workforce, accessing critical supplies, enhancing infrastructure (including telehealth capabilities), augmenting capacity, and keeping the doors open to care for patients and our community during this emergency. We thank you for the recent support to the health care community of $50 million for the purchase of medical equipment and supplies. However, as we continue to prepare for and respond to COVID-19, additional resources will be necessary. We look forward to working with you to address these pressing needs.

The needs for critical resources to support ongoing efforts to treat patients who test positive for COVID-19 and to prevent the further spread of the virus, are both short- and long-term.

The Healthcare Coronavirus Emergency Response Fund, accessible to all service providers, needs to be established to provide resources necessary to confront a worst-case scenario. This fund could be distributed by the state Department of Health, in collaboration with other agencies, and based on evaluation of needs. Funds not utilized could be returned to the state.
Our health and human service providers are preparing to respond in a worst-case scenario. The opportunity has passed to “wait-and-see,” and action is needed now. Please act quickly and establish a dedicated fund to support our front line health care professionals.

Respectfully,

Ambulance Association of Pennsylvania
Healthcare Council of Western Pennsylvania
Health Federation of Philadelphia
LeadingAge PA
Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians
Pennsylvania Ambulatory Surgery Association
Pennsylvania Association for Behavioral Healthcare
Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers
Pennsylvania Association of Certified Nurse Midwives
Pennsylvania Athletic Trainers Society
Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Pennsylvania Chapter, American College of Physicians
Pennsylvania Chapter, National Association of Social Workers
Pennsylvania Coalition for Oral Health
Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners
Pennsylvania College of Emergency Physicians
Pennsylvania Health Care Association
Pennsylvania Homecare Association
Pennsylvania Medical Society
Pennsylvania Optometric Association
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association
Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association
Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association
Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society
Pennsylvania Psychological Association
Pennsylvania Rural Health Association
Pennsylvania Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care
Pennsylvania State Nurses Association
Pennsylvania Society of Physician Assistants
Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association
Safety-Net Association of Pennsylvania
The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania
The Urban Health Care Coalition of Pennsylvania