



COLORADO ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR COLORADO

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March 23, 2020

Governor Jared Polis
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

We are gravely concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the public and on practicing Family Physicians providing Primary Care in Colorado. We are particularly concerned that those without symptoms can transmit and spread the virus without realizing it – which can severely affect our capacity to safeguard the health of our communities.

The State of Colorado's recent bulletin, "Ordering Colorado Employers to Reduce In-Person Workforce by Fifty Percent Due to the Presence of COVID-19 in the State" is insufficient. Reducing workforces by 50% for non-essential businesses is an ineffective compromise. It sends the wrong message to the public. Not only will the crisis now overwhelm the healthcare system, many more people will likely die as a direct result; and the crisis will last much longer, costing more people their "livelihoods" in the long run.

Colorado's Primary Care Physicians (PCP) have not received communications and important information notices from the State regarding COVID-19. As frontline workers for community health, it is essential for PCPs to have regular, direct communications from their licensing agencies on state directives that will affect primary care practices, as they are in other affected states.

Without Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) we, our staff and patients are at-risk. Primary Care Physicians have been asking patients to stay home and shelter in place.

Urgent action is required if we are to keep the Primary Care Workforce protected and healthy enough to respond to this pandemic. We have several requests that we hope you will issue as an executive order to keep our citizens and physician workforce safe.

1. We request the Governor order all persons in the State of Colorado to stay home or at their place of residence except as needed to maintain continuity of state operations deemed critical by the Governor's office. Individuals should only leave their residence and practice social distancing to acquire necessities such as food, medicine or medical

care. Individuals should call their medical provider's office, or EMS in an emergency, prior to seeking medical care.

2. Create central testing sites, where clinicians can also receive COVID-19 testing.
3. Direct the public that if they become symptomatic, they should contact – but not visit – their doctor's office.
4. Communicate to physicians, either through DORA or other coordinated means, important health related announcements (such as the Governor's executive order to restrict elective surgical procedures), because it is not currently occurring.

The Colorado Academy of Family Physicians looks forward to working hand-in-hand with the Governor's Office in this time of crisis. We will be significantly escalating our public education campaign to help inform the public of the severity of this crisis, and the importance of absolute social distancing and sheltering in place as the only measure to contain the virus and save lives.

Thank you for all you are doing to protect the people of Colorado. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Cawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last letters of the first and second names being prominent.

John Cawley, MD, FAAFP
President, CAFP