

March 1, 2021

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the undersigned osteopathic specialty and state organizations, and the more than 151,000 osteopathic physicians and medical students we represent, thank you for the steps you have taken and will continue to take to protect Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this unprecedented time, Osteopathic physicians (DOs) have remained steadfast in delivering healthcare on the frontlines to treat and care for patients across primary care, emergency medicine, and all medical specialty settings in every state in America. We write to express our appreciation for the executive action taken over the past few weeks to slow the spread of COVID-19, and to offer our organizations as a resource in your efforts to implement the National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness.

We recognize that our nation is at a critical point in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and we remain committed to patient access to care and safety. DOs are an essential part of the physician workforce on the frontlines of the pandemic. The collaboration and coordination between the Administration's Coronavirus Task Force, Congress, state and local health departments and national physician organizations is fundamental to flattening the curve and strengthening our healthcare system.

A key aspect of accomplishing this goal and getting our nation back to "normal" is ensuring access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for both patients and frontline physicians as well as other healthcare workers during the pandemic. We applaud your recognition of this vital need and your Administration's efforts to accelerate the manufacturing and delivery of equipment that are needed as COVID-19 continues to spread across our nation (e.g. N95 respirator masks, gowns, surgical masks, eye protection, and intensive care unit (ICU) equipment). Continuous access to these critical items is crucial to reducing the spread of the virus.

One additional area of concern that is important to highlight is the ongoing need for greater awareness and utilization of evidence-based vaccine guidelines. Absent sufficient attention, our nation's ability to emerge from this pandemic will be impeded. Largely driven by online misinformation, an increasing number of patients in recent years have become more hesitant to receiving vaccines. Additional drivers for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy include concerns about safety and efficacy due to the rapid development and the Food and Drug Administration's expeditious approval timeline for COVID-19 vaccines. Restoring confidence in the safety and effectiveness of vaccines will be crucial to ensuring uptake of all COVID-19 vaccines.

Our concern about awareness and utilization of vaccine guidelines also includes how states account for osteopathic physicians and medical students in their vaccine distribution plans. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) explicitly includes all physicians as well as medical students and physician trainees in its list of examples of healthcare personnel who should be among the first offered the vaccine in category

'1a', many states are not facilitating vaccine access for all physicians or including medical students. This inconsistent approach risks patient access to care. Additionally, medical students should be prioritized since they are often in a clinical setting as part of their education.

Likewise, as your Administration and states consider options for increasing capacity for vaccine administration, physician practices and medical students are untapped resources for increasing vaccine access, but they must first be immunized.#

As we continue to battle this virus and care for our patients, we also look forward to working with your Administration. We stand ready to be a resource to you during this challenging time so that all Americans have access to the highest quality of care and to ultimately end this devastating pandemic. If our organizations can be a resource in any way, please contact David Pugach, JD, AOA Senior Vice President of Public Policy, at dpugach@osteopathic.org or (202) 349-8753.

Sincerely,

American Osteopathic Association

American Academy of Osteopathy

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

American College of Osteopathic Internists

American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists

American College of Osteopathic Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American College of Osteopathic Surgeons

American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine

American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine

American Osteopathic Association

American Osteopathic Association of Prolotherapy Regenerative Medicine

American Osteopathic College of Anesthesiologists

American Osteopathic College of Dermatology

American Osteopathic College of Pathologists

American Osteopathic College of Radiology

Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association

Florida Osteopathic Medical Association

Georgia Osteopathic Medical Association

Idaho Osteopathic Physicians Association

Illinois Osteopathic Medical Society

Indiana Osteopathic Association

Iowa Osteopathic Medical Association

Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine

Kentucky Osteopathic Medical Association

Louisiana Osteopathic Medical Association

Maine Osteopathic Association

Maryland Association of Osteopathic Physicians

Massachusetts Osteopathic Society

Michigan Osteopathic Association

Minnesota Osteopathic Medical Society

Mississippi Osteopathic Medical Association

Missouri Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons

New Jersey Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons

New York State Osteopathic Medical Society
North Carolina Osteopathic Medical Association
Ohio Osteopathic Association
Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons of Oregon
Osteopathic Physicians & Surgeons of California
Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association
South Carolina Osteopathic Medical Society
Tennessee Osteopathic Medical Association
Texas Osteopathic Medical Association
Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association
Washington Osteopathic Medical Association
Wisconsin Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons