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March 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Members of the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM), a national medical society of 3,500 general internists, are on the front lines of providing care to patients suffering with COVID-19. As such, our members are also at serious risk of falling victim to this highly contagious virus when they lack appropriate high-quality personal protective equipment (PPE).

This is not an academic discussion. The impact of the shortages of masks, gowns and other PPE is very real. In one major hospital in the southeast, nine physicians are currently diagnosed with COVID-19 and thus are unable to work until they clear the virus. Shrinking the physician workforce at the very time that the patient population is surging is a recipe for disaster.

Two days ago, the President invoked the Defense Production Act, but took no action to implement the powers created in that law. Today, the administration indicates that they will use those powers. Our plea to you is very simple: Please implore the administration to utilize the full force and effect of this critical law for every aspect of addressing this crisis for which it can be valuable and appropriate funding for the purchase of PPE.

SGIM members are risking their health and their lives to serve our patients – your constituents. Please help us to help them.



Sincerely,

Eric B Bass

Eric B. Bass, MD, MPH
CEO

cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chairman
House Energy & Commerce Committee

The Honorable Greg Walden, Ranking Member
House Energy & Commerce Committee

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chair
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee