



A Strong, Collective Physician Voice

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March 29, 2020

Douglas Ducey

Governor, State of Arizona

1700 W Washington St

Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

I am writing on behalf of Maricopa County Medical Society (MCMS), which has been representing, serving, and advocating for our members for the past 128 years, acting as a strong, collective physician voice. The COVID-19 pandemic obligates us to fulfill our mission: protecting the health of the community and supporting our patients' rights and choices, while ensuring the professionalism, ethics and quality of practice in medicine. The physicians of MCMS hereby beseech you to take **immediate** action to protect the lives of our physician members and the lives of Arizona's citizens, by issuing a **Shelter-In-Place** order as soon as possible.

Your current executive orders are not quelling this crisis. Our community IS NOT taking "social distancing" seriously and many are ignoring such recommendations altogether. We can learn from places that have controlled COVID-19 successfully by limiting the movement of their people. We now know that **extensive** social distancing (allowing only 1 in 8 people to be mobile) actually works, but only if we act NOW while the numbers of infected people are relatively low.

The true number of cases of COVID-19 is unknown due to minimal testing - (Arizona ranks #50 in number of test kits per capita) - but the estimated number of actual cases may be 100 times more than the 919 diagnosed cases reported today; thus, as many as 92,000 Arizonans may currently be infected and the number of cases is doubling every 3 days. At this rate, in 3 weeks we could have over 117,000 reported cases, and almost 12 million actual cases in the worst-case scenario. The longer we wait to act, the worse it will get, increasing exponentially and overrunning our hospital system. We simply do not have enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), hospital beds, ICU beds, ventilators, and medical staff to care for

these future patients and cannot procure these life-saving measures in time to manage their cases. Critical Care and Emergency Medicine specialists and support staff will dwindle due to their own illness and deaths, whereupon doctors in other specialties will be called to the front lines to perform procedures that they have not performed in the decades since medical school. These physicians will be forced to make difficult decisions, such as which of two human beings will get a ventilator, or who will be sent home to die from respiratory or cardiac shutdown. Many will die alone without a family member present due to restrictions on visitors. But **right now**, we have the foresight and ability to slow and even **“flatten the curve”** of growth, reducing the number of COVID-19 patients to a manageable level. If we can buy more time, there will be more available resources, and more data on this virus to inform us how to best treat our patients.

Today, Arizona is still considered a “cool spot” on the map with relatively few COVID-19 cases, but preventing us from becoming a “hot spot” may minimize the economic impact on tourism, etc. Regardless, we trust that financial considerations will never take precedence over human life.

Our MCMS physicians proudly stand ready to fulfill our duty and our calling to our patients by serving in the “front lines” of this war. We humbly ask you to do your part by issuing an urgent **Shelter-in-Place** order and a **significantly shortened list of “essential” services** to keep more people at home and save countless lives. It may be difficult to do, but we believe it is the moral and ethical thing to do at this critical juncture.

Respectfully,

Lee Ann Kelley, MD
President, Maricopa County Medical Society