



June 22, 2020

Maribel Ramos
Legislative Director
National Governors Association
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 267
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Ramos:

The Physicians Advocacy Institute (PAI) appreciates the opportunity to weigh in with the National Governors Association at a time when the nation's governors are leading the governmental response during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is challenging every aspect of our health care system.

PAI's Board of Directors include the CEOs of nine of the nation's leading state medical associations.¹ These organizations have been working tirelessly over the past several months to support physicians, including those on the front-line treating patients infected with COVID-19 and also those whose practices have been severely impacted by state orders limiting in-person office visits, tests and surgeries to those deemed "essential."

As the NGA weighs in with Congress and the Administration on the importance of federal financial support during this crisis and other topics, we urge consideration of the need to prioritize support for physicians whose practices are in danger of failing. Large, well-capitalized hospitals and health systems have secured a disproportionate level of federal financial support to date, while stressed physician practices struggle to stay afloat. These practices include physicians who practice in rural and other underserved areas, whose continued care for their vulnerable patient population is essential to our functioning health care system. As the distribution of currently allocated federal financial support continues, and in any new federal package to help address financial supports for losses incurred due to this pandemic, Congress and HHS need to focus on distributing funding where it is most needed.

¹ PAI Board members represent the California Medical Association, Medical Society of the State of New York, North Carolina Medical Society, Medical Association of Georgia, Nebraska Medical Association, Connecticut State Medical Society, South Carolina Medical Association, Tennessee Medical Association and Texas Medical Association.

PAI's efforts include federal and state advocacy on issues relating to fair contracting and payment, championing the ability of physicians to sustain independent medical practices that are threatened by consolidation in the health care marketplace. PAI also supports research that helps to educate policymakers, including governors, state legislators, members of Congress and federal regulators, on issues relating to the practice of medicine in the U.S. We also develop issue briefs and other materials to inform health care policy in both the public and private marketplace.

State medical associations fully understand the challenges that the governors face in coming months as their work continues to combat the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to PAI's federal Congressional and regulatory advocacy efforts, our state association affiliates are in close dialogue with their governors and senior staff to work through issues that have presented in the states during this crisis.

We appreciate your willingness to consider the attached briefing document that identifies specific recommendations regarding policies and financial supports needed for the next phase of this pandemic and to prepare for future public health emergencies. PAI and our affiliated state medical associations are available for further dialogue at your request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelly C. Kenney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "K" and "C".

Kelly C. Kenney
CEO, Physicians Advocacy Institute