SOLIDARITY OF PURPOSE

To our fellow citizens, friends, and families,

We are faced today with a health care crisis the likes of which we've never before encountered. This rapidly spreading pandemic will require everyone to do their part to slow and eventually stop its spread. Everything turns on our willingness to work together toward this solidarity of purpose: To confront COVID-19, mitigate this pandemic, and minimize the loss of life.

What You Can Do

Commit to practicing social distancing.

Social distancing is the only way to "flatten" the epidemic curve, and it will literally save lives. Your risk may be low, but others are counting on you — your elderly parents and grandparents, friends and neighbors with chronic illnesses, colleagues, and fellow healthcare workers. The fewer infected people there are, the safer everyone will be.

Know when to seek medical attention and when to stay put.

If you're feeling sick, per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, stay home, and call your primary care physician first. Do not just show up at your doctor's office. This virus is highly contagious, and when you just show up, health care workers and other patients will potentially be exposed to this infection.

Your doctor will ask you questions about your symptoms, where you've been, and who you've been with — all basic information that will help your doctor assess how at-risk you are for COVID-19.

If COVID-19 infection is suspected, but your symptoms are mild, and you are not at high risk—as will be the case with most — you'll be advised to self-quarantine at home. If you are advised to self-quarantine and there are others in your home, here's what you will need to do:

- Stay in one room or one section of your home;
- use a separate bathroom, if possible;
- wear a face mask;
- cover coughs and sneezes with the inside of your elbow — not your hand;
- wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds;
- avoid sharing personal items like eating utensils, dishware, towels, or bedding; and
- clean surfaces such as doorknobs/door handles, countertops, toilets, phones, keyboards, and other surfaces frequently.

If you have a high fever with cough and/or severe respiratory symptoms (e.g., not being able to finish a sentence without taking a breath, etc.), you will likely be advised to go to a nearby emergency department (ED).

If you go to an emergency department, expect delays and restrictions. Please be patient.

Visiting an emergency department during a pandemic is not like visiting an ED during normal times. There will be restrictions in place to protect the health of other patients, physicians, nurses, other medical staff, and the general public. As an example, to prevent further spread of the infection, you will likely not be allowed any visitors while

getting care in an emergency department during this crisis. Additionally, if symptoms warrant, you may be placed in an isolation room while receiving care in an emergency department.

Entryways will be restricted. Your first stop may be to a tent or other temporary structure outside the emergency department. Temporary structures, like tents, will allow emergency departments to care for more patients as needed as well as to keep patients who are potentially infected with COVID-19 separated from other patients to reduce the spread of the disease.

You will be screened. You may be given a mask to wear when entering an emergency department. Staff will ask you guideline questions from the CDC. Examples of these screening questions include: Do you have a fever, cough, or trouble breathing? Have you been around anyone diagnosed with the COVID-19 infection?

You may or may not be tested. Because COVID-19 tests are limited, many emergency departments will only test patients who need admission to the hospital for additional care. This means that patients with mild symptoms, who can safely recover at home, will likely *not* be tested for COVID-19 infection. If you are tested for COVID-19 infection, a health care provider will swab your nose and throat and send the specimen to a laboratory. Results for the COVID-19 test usually arrive 24–48 hours after collection of the specimen.

If you have no or mild symptoms…
Fortunately, most people who have COVID-19 infection will have no or mild symptoms. If you report to an emergency department with mild symptoms, you will likely be returned home with instructions for self-care (e.g., hydration, pain and fever control, etc.) and isolation (i.e., self-quarantine) from others for a specified period of time to prevent the spread of the infection.

We represent the emergency physicians around the country who stand ready to care and fight for you during this pandemic crisis and every day. We appreciate your support of us, too.

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