



April 6, 2020

The Honorable
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable
Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable
Charles Schumer (D-NY)
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable
Kevin McCarthy (R-CA)
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Urgent Request for PPE and Other Critical Supplies for the Medical Community During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

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

On behalf of the American Society of Transplantation (AST), representing a majority of the nation's medical professionals engaged in the field of solid organ transplantation, we applaud your strong bipartisan leadership to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Our community thanks and commends you for your rapid advancement of the first three Coronavirus aid, relief and economic stimulus packages. As the House and Senate move to develop a fourth stimulus and relief legislative package, the solid organ transplant community as well as the many immunocompromised patients that we serve, respectfully request your urgent assistance in providing critical supplies not only for our field, but for all medical professionals risking their lives every day to fight the war on COVID-19.

Since the very beginning of the pandemic we have been contacted by our members, transplant physician teams and patients from across the country regarding the lack of necessary medical supplies. Early on in the beginning of the pandemic, our healthcare professionals from the northeast were advised to ration their wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) to examine and treat only those patients with clear symptoms of COVID-19. Due to this misstep, healthcare workers have been put unnecessarily in harm's way, with many now positive for the virus. As you know, it has become increasingly clear that asymptomatic patients have been unknowingly infecting those not wearing appropriate protective gear meant to prevent the spread of this virus.

Similarly, testing kits were initially held for the sickest patients rather than those who were exposed to the virus either through known interactions or as healthcare providers. The result being additional unintentional spread of COVID-19. As a consequence, the medical community

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in COVID-19 hot spots are now fighting personnel shortages in addition to severe equipment deficits, including the ventilators necessary to appropriately manage these critically ill patients.

As healthcare providers on the front lines of this battle, we believe it is absolutely necessary to exercise universal precautions in caring for all patients to protect against unknowing COVID-19 transmission, practice that was adopted during the AIDS crisis to avoid transmission. Unfortunately, we lack adequate supply to ensure patient and provider safety. As you are aware, healthcare providers in some regions of the country are already having to resort to potentially ineffective “homemade” protective masks and utilizing trash bags in light of gown shortages.

As you develop this next phase of Coronavirus relief legislation, our community of medical professions and patients implores you to fight for critical supplies for our hospitals to meet the challenges that they are facing around the clock: PPE, test kits and laboratory reagents, ventilators, and medications that seem to be successful in treating these infected patients and other necessary resources. We must learn from the initial missteps in this crisis to better arm our colleagues in other parts of the country as this war rages through our population.

The AST and broader transplant community are working together to create, disseminate and constantly update [resources](#) to better educate our healthcare providers and our immunocompromised transplant patients, who are at a much greater risk for COVID-19 infection than the general population. The AST looks forward to working with and supporting your ongoing efforts to ensure that health care providers across the country will soon be armed with the critical health care medical supplies, PPE and equipment necessary to combat and defeat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and steadfast resolve to win this battle. As always, please do not hesitate to let us know how we may best support you in this urgent effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Blumberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Emily A. Blumberg, MD
President