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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 20, 2020

Respiratory Therapists: Warriors in the Fight Against COVID-19

These Unsung Heroes Stand Ready and United for Patient Care

(IRVING, TX – March 20, 2020) – "Now, more than ever before, the role of the respiratory therapist is vital to the health of our nation," said AARC Executive Director, Tom Kallstrom, MBA, RRT, FAARC. "Respiratory therapists sacrifice and dedicate themselves to helping their patients and their communities during this time of COVID-19."

United for Care

Respiratory therapists all over the country and beyond stand united during this time, working to help patients and their communities. These specialized health care practitioners are trained in cardiopulmonary care in order to work therapeutically with people suffering from pulmonary disease. They are on the front line in the COVID-19 fight, working with physicians to help patients survive.

Ventilator Expertise

According to Timothy R. Myers MBA, RRT-NPS, FAARC, AARC Chief Business Officer, "the respiratory therapist is the only health care clinician didactically and clinically educated and trained in the art and science of mechanical ventilation."

COVID-19 attacks the lungs and respiratory system of patients. This is where ventilators come in to help.

"Ventilators are life support technologies. About 5% of the patients with COVID-19 cannot sustain normal respiratory function and are required to be intubated—the placement of a breathing tube into their airway," Myers said.

Trained respiratory therapists determine the appropriate ventilator settings to match the patient's respiratory needs. From that point, they provide constant monitoring and assessment and modify the setting as the patient's condition improves or worsens.

Needed for Patients

There are about 150,000 respiratory therapists in the U.S., and the need for more continues to grow (be-an-rt.org). Respiratory therapists often cite a “calling to serve” others as their inspiration to pursue the profession. This driving purpose is profoundly evident as they work with patients and medical teams during this crisis.

“Warriors for health. An essential component for patients. A keystone in the COVID-19 battle. I commend respiratory therapists all over for their work and selfless acts of service and caring for patients,” Kallstrom said. “For all they do, yesterday, today, tomorrow, and beyond, I say ‘Thank you.’”

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About the AARC

Founded in 1947, the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) is the leading national and international professional association for respiratory care. We encourage and promote professional excellence, advance the science and practice of respiratory care, and advocate for patients, their families, the public, the profession, and the respiratory therapist. Supporting more than 47,000 members worldwide, the AARC is a not-for-profit professional association headquartered in Irving, TX. Learn more about us at www.aarc.org.