

The American Association for Respiratory Care and the American Heart Association Urge Protective Measures as COVID Infection Rates and Deaths Continue to Rise

The nation continues to be faced with daily increases of COVID-related infections and deaths, and we are concerned about its continuing overall effect on the health care system. The tireless cadre of health care professionals, such as physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, first responders, emergency medical technicians and others who put their lives at risk each day to combat the deadly coronavirus continue to be asked to do more, as burnout and other mental health issues pose a serious risk to their well-being.

We are encouraged that a vaccine may be available in the coming weeks that can help mitigate the devastating effects of COVID-19. But it will take time to distribute the vaccine and to evaluate its results. In the interim, it is critical now, more than ever, that federal and state governments prioritize their efforts to ensure a sufficient and equitable distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other resources that meet established safety standards to safeguard front-line workers who provide care to those infected with COVID-19 in order to have the tools necessary to keep them safe and to ensure the safety of their patients.

As we stated earlier in the year, we continue to be committed to doing our part in working with a variety of federal and state policymakers and private health officials as our nation relies on the dedication of these healthcare providers to meet the demands forced upon them by this novel virus. Their strength and resiliency in confronting these challenging times head-on can assist in abating the continued spread of the coronavirus and the rise in infection rates and deaths. But to meet the demand, timely and effective distribution of PPE is essential to protect the vulnerable populations impacted by this disease. It is vital that policymakers act immediately to ensure the safety of our healthcare workforce and their patients.

With the holiday season upon us, we encourage everyone to wear a mask in public, to practice safe distancing, and to wash their hands thoroughly and regularly. Protecting health care workers and other essential personnel, ourselves, our families, and most of all the patient population can help alleviate the stronghold this deadly disease has placed on our daily lives.

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. With more than 45,000 members worldwide, the AARC is a not-for-profit professional association headquartered in Irving, TX. Learn more about us at www.aarc.org.

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public's health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on heart.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.