

AAP among groups urging adequate PPE for health care professionals

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Editor's note: For the latest news on coronavirus disease 2019, visit

<https://www.aapublications.org/news/2020/01/28/coronavirus>.

Swift action to ensure adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided to health care professionals on the front lines of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic was called for today by the AAP and 44 other specialty societies.

The Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) represents 800,000 physicians, all grappling with problems related to PPE access.

The *CMSS Statement on Personal Protective Equipment* outlines five fundamental expectations based on ongoing problems with access to PPE.

Physicians and other health care professionals have spoken publicly about their concerns via the news media and on social media. Some who have aired concerns about access to PPE have faced repercussions.

“These individuals should not be at risk of having their employment terminated, or be otherwise disciplined, for speaking out, within their health care systems or publicly, on conditions and practices related to care of COVID-19 patients that the physician and other health care professional has direct knowledge of and deems to be in conflict with the health and safety of patients, themselves, and others involved in providing care to patients,” according to the CMSS statement.

Health care professionals should have the freedom to advocate for the best interest as “necessary to achieve needed change for the health and safety of patients and clinicians, both within the health care facility and more broadly,” the groups state.

Institutions are expected to provide appropriate means to limit occupational exposure. If an institution is unable to fulfill its responsibility to provide adequate PPE, the statement calls for support of physicians and other health care professionals who bring their own PPE to protect themselves, colleagues and patients. This recommendation is backed by a Joint Commission statement allowing for use of private PPE. It does not obviate the institution's responsibility.

Finally, a simple, uniform mechanism is needed so that all health care facilities can report PPE and other medical supply needs to guide optimal distribution of supplies across the country. To ensure adequate supply and distribution of PPE, the statement supports coordination by federal, state and local authorities.

Pediatricians are encouraged to discuss PPE and other pressing pandemic topics on the AAP COVID-19 Discussion Boards at <https://collaborate.aap.org/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>.

