

April 1, 2019

An open letter to Governor Baker and to the Massachusetts legislature:

As health professionals at the front line of the response to the COVID19 crisis, we call on you to urgently take further action to enable the health community to deal with the predicted surge in cases that is anticipated over the next 7- 10 days.

It is clear to all of us that the federal government has failed to provide adequate public health leadership for the nation in this crisis, and we recognize that what transpires here in Massachusetts is inextricably linked to federal actions. However, we need to step forward in Massachusetts to provide strong public health leadership for our own community. We need to bring together the strengths of the scientific, business, public and private entities of the Commonwealth to save lives and bring stability to our state.

We call on you to:

- (1) Take more effective and enforceable action to promote social distancing. Many non- essential workers, particularly immigrants, are still being forced to work against their better judgement -- putting themselves, their families and the entire community at risk.
- (2) Develop and articulate a clear, statewide plan for the public health response, in the short term and the long term, that is informed by public health experts drawn from our own world-renowned institutions.
- (3) Mobilize a public health army and a local supply chain in the Commonwealth to provide the staff, supplies and space we need. In particular,
 - a. We need to immediately mobilize local production of personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - b. We need to take over the requisition and distribution of PPE to ensure an equitable and adequate distribution for all hospitals across the Commonwealth.
 - c. We need to collect all existing PPE from offices that perform elective

procedures, such as dentists and physical therapists, and distribute these to hospitals.

- (4) Improve communication and transparency by including a qualified and articulate public health professional in briefings to the public and to the health care community.

In shaping this response, our priorities need to be:

1. to minimize loss of life
2. to minimize loss of livelihoods
3. to minimize harm to the health system
4. to protect the most vulnerable among us
5. to emerge with a strong, comprehensive public health system to prevent and prepare for other global health crises