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Dear PAFP members,

I want thank every one of you for your tireless efforts on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Answering the call to a career in medicine is a commitment to selflessness. The scope, breath and intensity of our service and sacrifice is often overlooked until moments like this bring the significance of what we do to the forefront. Additionally, the PAFP renews its commitment for self care and to helping each of you optimize your health and wellness because a healthy workforce is an essential ingredient in the ongoing battle against this global pandemic.

We are at an unprecedented time and are looking to make sure we are doing our best to help you care for your patients. I assure you that the PAFP continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the clinical guidance from state, federal and global sources. In an effort to provide you with the most current information with respect to the PAFP's actions we plan to update our COVID-19 webpage weekly.

In the collected resources section of the webpage we continue to provide you with links to the AAFP, the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. These resources provide up-to-date information on the statistics and management of patients who present with suspected COVID-19.

It is clear that social distancing is the most important strategy in reducing transmission. To that end, the PAFP has been a vocal advocate for strategies that encourage a transition to increased use of telehealth platforms for patient care. In last week's media release, we highlighted the importance of expanded coverage for telehealth options from both CMS and commercial insurers.

We have sent a joint letter with the PAAP and PACP urging for telehealth, licensing reciprocity with neighboring states, expedited credentialing of physicians, and suspension of prior authorization. We feel these measures will ensure timely care for patients during this crisis.

Recognizing that many of us are practicing daily at ground-zero locations within an ever-expanding public health emergency, we recognize that personal protective equipment (PPE) must be considered both mission-essential and mission-critical. (continued)

On your behalf, we sent a letter urging Gov. Tom Wolf, Secretary of Health Rachel Levine and PEMA Director Randy Padfield to keep family physicians in mind when allocating these resources whether they work independently or as a part of a larger health system.

The PAFP along with the AAFP will continue to be your voice to ensure that federal, state, and local jurisdictions understand the vital role that we all play and how critically important it is for us have access to timely information and appropriate resources. With the right information and tools, we are confident that we can care for our communities and our families, while also protecting our personal health and safety.

I appreciate everyone's commitment to your patients, staff, colleagues, and families, and I remain confident that together we will weather this storm. THANK YOU again, for everything you do!

Sincerely,
Tracey Conti, MD
President
The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians