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May 15, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Republican Leader
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), we appreciate the recent actions taken by Congress to help physicians meet the demands of the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. We also want to express our support for the many provisions in H.R. 6800, the “Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act” (HEROES Act), that provide stability for physician practices and promote public health.

Physician practices are continuing to struggle to meet the needs of their patients and staff as they confront worsening revenue shortages resulting from deferring visits and procedures as part of the system-wide effort to conserve personal protective equipment and support the social distancing that is necessary to curb community spread of COVID-19. Many physician practices in all types of specialties and practice settings have either temporarily closed or will be forced to do so in coming weeks. Given the continuing overhead and payroll costs, many are experiencing cash flow issues and need assistance to avoid an implosion of the private medical practice infrastructure. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ most recent Employment Situation report revealed that 243,000 jobs were lost in physician offices in April alone, building on the 12,000 lost in March.

Accordingly, we sincerely appreciate the inclusion of provisions in H.R. 6800 to protect access to care by providing needed resources and policy changes to enable physicians to continue caring for patients during this pandemic. We support the additional resources for the Health Care Provider Relief Fund for expenses related directly to COVID-19 care as well as for lost revenues that result from the pandemic. We also support the needed improvements to the Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment Program, additional federal student loan relief, and many other provisions of the HEROES Act.

We hope to continue to work with you and other members of Congress to advance final legislation to achieve the goal of ensuring that physicians have the resources and tools to meet the demands of this crisis and the ongoing health care needs of all patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD