

April 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-222
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, Room S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
The Capitol, Room H-204
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, Room S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) and its 46,000 members, I am writing in support of policies and funding to ensure that emergency nurses and other frontline health care providers have sufficient equipment and other resources to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Given the urgency of this issue, we request the inclusion of these measures in the "Phase 4" COVID-19 emergency relief legislation currently being drafted. Further, we urge that such legislation be passed by Congress and enacted into law at the earliest possible date. Frontline health care workers are already facing dire resource shortages and the situation is very likely to worsen in the coming weeks.

We are appreciative of your efforts to pass legislation, including the \$8.3 billion emergency bill (H.R. 6074) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, both of which made important investments in securing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for health care personnel and ramping up testing for COVID-19.

These efforts have helped alleviate shortages of medical equipment in certain areas. Nevertheless, the distribution and availability of these supplies are uneven at best. Even today, there are reports that some hospitals still lack sufficient testing supplies and basic protective gear, including N95 masks, face shields, gowns or gloves. This was confirmed in a report released earlier this week by the Inspector General's Office of the Department of Health and Human Services. In response to the lack of adequate medical equipment, providers are being asked to reuse masks and other equipment well beyond what usage protocols recommend. This puts the safety of emergency nurses, other health care workers and their patients at risk.

Therefore, we request that the next round of legislation include the following provisions:

- The creation, within the federal government, of a supply chain czar. This high-level official would be charged with overseeing and directing the production, sourcing and distribution of all medical supplies related to COVID-19.
- Additional investments in PPE and other medical equipment for frontline health care workers and hospitals. This includes funding for the rapid provision of coronavirus testing kits to areas where testing is currently not widely available.

- Ensuring that timely testing for COVID-19 is readily available for frontline health care workers.
- Hazard or premium pay for frontline health care providers in recognition of the high risks they are experiencing in treating coronavirus patients. In addition, hazard pay will serve as an incentive for the recruitment and retention of emergency nurses and other frontline health care personnel.
- OSHA should take emergency action to protect health care providers who are facing serious risks to their health and safety resulting from the critical shortage of PPE and reported serious failures by employers to comply with the CDC's infection control guidance and best practices.

If you have any questions, please contact ENA's Chief Government Relations Officer, Richard Mereu, at 202-741-9373. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hastings". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Hastings, MSN, RN, CEN
2020 President
Emergency Nurses Association