

March 2, 2020

Robert Kadlec, M.D.
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)
HHS Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. Kadlec,

As a pharmacist and CEO of the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA), I write today to offer our willingness to work collaboratively with HHS to curb the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and play an integral role in any containment campaign. Independent community pharmacy is ready and willing to help and is well-positioned to be part of the solution.

NCPA represents America's community pharmacists, including 21,000 independent community pharmacies. Almost half of all community pharmacies provide long-term care services and play a critical role in ensuring patients have immediate access to medications in both community and long-term care settings. Our members are small business owners who are among America's most accessible healthcare providers.

Community pharmacists are an integral part of a robust and successful national response. Ninety-one percent of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy and more than seventy-five percent of our members provide immunizations and offer home/work site delivery of medication. Community pharmacy is perfectly situated to intervene and provide meaningful services. Here are a few important ways our members can assist:

- Provide up-to-date influenza and pneumonia vaccinations which are beneficial in the event a patient did contract COVID-19. Independent pharmacies are perfectly positioned to mass immunize once a vaccine is developed for COVID-19.
- Test for influenza and strep, which assists physicians in triaging patients. Forty-four states allow for pharmacist point-of-care testing.
- Prescribe medications via collaborative practice agreements and keep primary care practices, emergency rooms, and hospitals clear for truly meaningful cases. Community pharmacists' ability to interface will be key to keeping patients out of hospitals through early intervention.
- Educate via dispersion of appropriate literature to the public. Many pharmacies can electronically provide meaningful education on-demand. Pharmacists also provide education at the local level in their communities.

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- Provide services (i.e. prescription delivery) to allow patients to stay at home if clinically advisable, thus minimizing disease transmission.

Throughout history community pharmacists have proven time and time again their ability to adapt to the needs of the communities they serve, an example being the important role community pharmacy played with H1N1. Pharmacies routinely partner with state and local health departments to ensure vaccines are available and administered by a health care professional, a community pharmacist, in a convenient location, a community pharmacy.

NCPA has multi-faceted ways of communicating to our members and will utilize all the vehicles at our disposal to communicate to our members information you want disseminated, thus ensuring appropriate provider and patient response in seeking, providing and receiving care.

Please contact me at 703-838-2648 or doug.hoey@ncpanet.org with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Douglas Hoey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "B." and last name "Hoey" clearly legible.

B. Douglas Hoey, RPh, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
National Community Pharmacists Association

CC: Alex M. Azar II
ADM Brett P. Giroir, M.D.