



April 10, 2020
Governor Abbott,

Thank you for your leadership and tireless efforts to protect Texans and deliver vital services in the face of the COVID - 19 Pandemic. This letter has been drafted to relay two major issues that have been brought to the forefront of the medical community. In order to give proper solutions to these issues, we are providing suggestions to swiftly and effectively address the medical community's concerns.

The first issue is a concern about the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for physician's offices. We are aware that there is statewide PPE distribution between hospitals and first responders of 80/20. However, physicians are also on the front line of assessing patients and potentially providing care for COVID-19 outside of the hospital setting. To ensure these providers have the protection they need, we suggest that a distribution be made through the Regional Advisory Councils or county medical societies of 10 percent of the allocation of PPE to community-based physician practices.

The second issue of concern is ensuring patients across the state continue to have access to medically necessary surgical care. There is, of course, emergency care that is still being performed, and we do not want to cause any interruptions. However, there are also many urgent situations that necessitate medical intervention in a timely manner to improve the life and function of patients. In assessing these situations, it is imperative physicians have the ability to exercise their medical judgement without fear of penalty. We greatly appreciate the ongoing discussions with members of your staff and the COVID – 19 response team about the best way to accomplish this goal of giving adequate care to patients. Consideration should be given to a staged resumption of non-emergent surgical care. The first stage might include elective outpatient day surgeries if the hospital verifies that it has enough PPE to meet the demands and potential needs as well as verifying the patient doesn't have any symptoms of COVID - 19. Simultaneous to this suggestion, there should also be a resumption of surgical care in rural hospitals as the geographic distance for care is quite burdensome to many patients in rural Texas. Finally, the last stage would of course be resumption of elective cases for individuals at higher risk of morbidity with COVID - 19.

Thank you again for your leadership of Texas. We stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Schwertner".

Charles Schwertner, M.D.
State Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Buckingham".

Dawn Buckingham, M.D.
State Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Campbell, M.D.". The signature is somewhat stylized and includes a small "M.D." at the end.

Donna Campbell, M.D.
State Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Kolkhorst". The signature is somewhat stylized and includes a small "M.D." at the end.

Lois Kolkhorst
State Senator