



March 12, 2020

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

Thank you for your leadership in navigating the current COVID-19 outbreak as we all hope for the best and diligently plan for the worst. Our meeting with you earlier this week was productive, your staff follow-up outstanding, and the visitation restrictions you put in place are critical to slowing, containing, and mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in our member centers.

We will continue to make critical recommendations to you and your immediate team as we work closely with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ), the Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA), the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA) and individual hospital partners, as well as MedChi concerning ongoing and evolving universal issues across healthcare-- primarily staffing, supplies, testing, and care coordination.

As also discussed in our meeting, workforce and staffing issues, as well as financial concerns remain top priorities that we must address and plan for. Our goal is to provide the best care possible for Marylanders in our member centers.

Workforce and Staff

Our sector will likely need staffing ratio and other regulatory relief as schools close due to the advancement of COVID-19 and an increase of positive test results. You can grant that relief at the appropriate time via Emergency Declaration. As you stated in our meeting, National Guard troops with medical Military Occupational Specialties may be necessary to augment staff in hospitals and other care settings. Additionally, on workforce:

- Our members will likely need to provide child day care for young children whose schools are closed. Down the road, we will likely need government assistance in subsidizing that day care and perhaps regulatory relief that allows temporary units to be created in safe settings by our members facilities.
- The State might consider granting temporary Maryland licensure to physicians, nurses, and nursing assistants licensed in other states who tested negative for COVID-19 or are devoid of symptoms. There is precedent for this; during hurricanes Maryland has temporarily recognized such other state licenses.
- Maryland also might temporarily allow non-nursing assistants such as activity coordinators, social workers, or volunteers to help feed and transport patients and residents.



Governor Hogan
March 12, 2020
Page 2

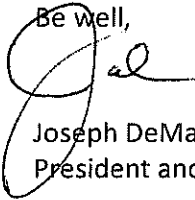
Financial

Due to closures, cancelations, the crash of global equity markets, the cost of emergency response, and the increased costs for staffing and supplies, the Maryland and national markets are in crisis. Unfortunately, our National Disaster Relief apparatus and funding mechanism is not set up to handle a full-scale national emergency. There will come a time for Congress and the Administration to enact major relief for state budgets, workers, and enterprise.

In the meantime, in your work with Vice President Pence and as the Chair of the National Governors Association (NGA), White House executive action could be taken to defer Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mortgage payments. As you know, HUD is the predominant lender in our sector and deferring (not forgiving) mortgage payments would free up cash for emergency staffing, child care, and supply expenses made by nursing homes during this crisis.

As I have said, we are very fortunate to have you and your team leading Maryland at this critical time. We remain in partnership and at your service.

Be well,



Joseph DeMattos
President and CEO

CC: The Honorable Robert R. Neall, Maryland Secretary of Health
Fran Phillips, Maryland Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services
Dr. Tricia Nay, Executive Director, Maryland Office of Health Care Quality
The Honorable Gov. Mark Parkinson, President & CEO, American Health Care Association
HFAM Board of Directors