



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Claude Brunson, MD, Mississippi State Medical Association, cbrunson@msmaonline.com, (601) Kennedy Jones, Fahrenheit Creative Group, LLC, kennedy@fcgworks.com, (601) 371-8003

State Medical Association and Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians Strongly Recommend Physicians Use Telemedicine to Protect Patients and Staff

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi State Medical Association (MSMA) and Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) have been working to keep Mississippi physicians informed about COVID-19 by maintaining frequent contact with the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH). At this time, MSMA and MAFP strongly support the MSDH recommendation to use telemedicine services to meet the healthcare needs of Mississippians during this crisis. In addition, MSMA and MAFP are working closely with the Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure, payers, and other interested parties to advocate for relaxation of any possible hindrances to patient care during this federal and state disaster declaration.

Clinic visits are deemed to be a risk for exposure to COVID-19 to patients and staff and are counter to national and state recommendations for social distancing. Therefore, MSMA and MAFP strongly recommend the use of telemedicine for all non-urgent issues across all medical specialties. Patients with non-urgent medical issues should be evaluated over the telephone, computer, or other appropriate HIPAA compliant platform as indicated in lieu of a face-to-face visit.

If patients have concerns regarding their risk for COVID-19 and what they should do, they should always call their healthcare professional first and not walk in to any clinic. For the foreseeable future, healthcare workers should be allowed to work remotely, where appropriate and possible. Remote working may enable these workers to care for their children when out of school, as well as further protect them as the “bench” for the healthcare workforce. This bench is critical, as healthcare professionals will be needed to rotate into front line care for patients. However, these workers could potentially need to be quarantined if they evaluate asymptomatic patients shedding virus, which would further expose an at-risk healthcare workforce.

MSMA and MAFP strongly suggest that risk stratification of our workforce begin immediately to include awareness of workers at highest risk for complications of COVID-19 and adjusting work environments where applicable in accordance with the physician or other healthcare worker's risk factors. Physicians can find more information and guidance related to COVID-19 at www.msmaonline.com/covid-19 and <https://www.msafp.org/public-awareness/coronavirus/>.

###

About the Mississippi State Medical Association

The Mississippi State Medical Association is the largest physician advocacy organization in Mississippi, representing nearly 5,000 physicians and medical students. Since 1856, MSMA has been a trusted health policy leader and professional development resource for physicians, representing the unified voice of physicians statewide on state and federal health care issues while providing information needed to navigate health care legislation and regulatory changes.

About the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians

The Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians has over 1,100 members consisting of physicians, residents, and medical students. Its mission is to support Family Medicine physicians as they improve the health of all Mississippians