



April 17, 2020

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of tens of thousands of pharmacy professionals across California who serve patients in a variety of health care settings including hospitals, integrated health systems, clinics, ambulatory care settings, nursing homes, retail, and home health care, we write with an urgent request that you and your Administration do everything in your power to meet frontline workers' needs - and the needs of the public - during this global COVID-19 outbreak.

We commend the swift actions you have taken to implement California's aggressive physical distancing policy and are thankful for your work on the production of some Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at scale. However, we are concerned that a surge in COVID-19 cases may exacerbate the current PPE crisis and that certain medications, especially those necessary to treat patients on ventilators, are in dangerously short supply. Without adequate supplies of necessary ventilator associated medications the ventilators that you have worked so hard to procure and refurbish are unusable.

We have heard from California hospitals and others across the nation, that they are struggling to acquire medications necessary for the use of ventilators and to manage respiratory support outside of ventilator use. Many hospitals in California are days away from running out of these necessary medications, while others have adequate supplies. The disparity in availability of life saving medications has highlighted the urgent need for a statewide approach to the acquisition and distribution of these medications to ensure all patients, regardless of location, have access to these medications. In addition, it's unclear as to whether hospitals have access to these medications via the California pharmaceutical stockpile. Our efforts to identify what medications are available, except for hydroxychloroquine, have been unsuccessful.

Your public-private partnership to manufacture 200 million masks a month is a much-needed step towards protecting California's health care workforce. However, we are concerned that this action alone may not be sufficient to cover all essential workers who desperately require PPE during this public health emergency. We are also troubled by the lack of transparency surrounding how PPE, essential medications, and other life-saving goods are being distributed.

CSHP would like to formally request that you place the highest possible priority on addressing the following issues:

- **Provide regular public reports on the current inventory of PPE, essential medications and the status of those supplies.** Regular reporting on the status of California's inventory can help us better identify needs in order to solve PPE, medication and ventilator shortages. This is especially important because the supply numbers from the federal government are often inflated, and many of their supplies are expired.
- **Designate a single agency to coordinate the expansion of PPE supply, and ensure a comprehensive and equitable distribution process.** The agency should be tasked with facilitating collaboration between public and private sectors to ensure essential workers have sufficient PPE. California's current response could be enhanced by having a single point of contact where health care facilities and organizations representing essential workers can coordinate our response by increasing the supply of PPE and ventilators.
- **Conduct an inventory of essential medications needed to treat COVID-19 patients. Use that information to provide a state-wide approach of medication distribution that meets the dynamic needs of hospitals to manage COVID-19 patients. Provide access to the state stockpile to supplement hospital medication supplies to handle current needs and surges.** Across the country we are seeing a surge in demand for more than a dozen sedatives, anesthetics, pain killers and muscle relaxants necessary to treat patients on mechanical ventilation. Recent reports indicate that the overall demand for these drugs rose 213% from January – April. Data compiled by the American Association of Health-System Pharmacists indicates that the need for these essential medications remains exceedingly strong and shortages are likely to persist.

CSHP pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have answered your call; we are working tirelessly and at great personal risk to ourselves and our families to fight COVID-19. However, we need more protection. We will not stop pushing until every essential worker has an adequate supply of PPE. This core principle is imperative because it will protect our workforce, but it will also protect our patients.

We look forward to continuing to partner with you, and we appreciate your compassionate, tireless, and clear-sighted leadership during this time of crisis.

Sincerely,



Loriann DeMartini, PharmD, MPH, BCGP
Chief Executive Office
California Society of Health System Pharmacists