



LOUISIANA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

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Dear Legislative Leadership:

We would like to recognize the leadership of our governor, legislature, and state and local officials in their COVID-19 response efforts. The steps we take now to contain and limit exposure will save lives and preserve our limited healthcare resources.

The decision to pause the legislative session allows the legislature to prepare and plan for our new normal. It also reaffirms the message from our federal, state, and local officials that we must work quickly to contain the virus by limiting personal interactions. The aggressive, preventative measures that we take now will pay off by reducing the spread of the virus and the number of deaths, as well as better positioning our state to respond to the crisis at hand.

Preventing a surge of cases that would overwhelm our hospital system is vital. The ability of our hospitals to maintain open beds, keep ventilators available, and allow healthcare professionals to continue to provide care rests largely on our ability to slow the doubling rate of this virus. This picture becomes clearer when comparing responses from various countries that have experienced this pandemic longer than the United States. For example, in Italy, the rate at which the number of cases doubles is every four days, as opposed to every 14 days in South Korea. South Korea's rapid response to test, isolate infected individuals, and contain the virus has resulted in its healthcare system being able to adequately care for patients and limit the number of cases. However, Italy's healthcare system has been overwhelmed because of the lack of proactive response, resulting in its medical needs drastically outweighing the available resources.

Non-pharmaceutical interventions, such as social distancing, are the most effective tools we currently have to limit the spread of the virus. We all must do our part to assist government and healthcare providers with COVID-19 containment as we wait for sufficient testing supplies to allow us to more aggressively test, isolate, and care for infected individuals.

We have an opportunity to impact this crisis now that will not be available later. Based on our past experiences with disasters, we understand the value of preparation and mitigation. Our hospitals and healthcare professionals are prepared and ready to meet the needs of Louisiana, but we need everyone's assistance to slow the spread of the virus, preserve resources, and save lives.

Sincerely,

Paul A. Salles
President & CEO