

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Amid New COVID-19 Surge, PPE Must Be Top Priority Says  
Critical Care Societies Collaborative**

New York, NY – Nov. 16, 2020 – In response to the reports of [COVID-19](#) surges around the country, the Critical Care Societies Collaborative, comprising the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, American College of Chest Physicians, the [American Thoracic Society](#) and the Society of Critical Care Medicine, released the following statement:

The Critical Care Societies Collaborative acknowledges all efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic through actions aimed at stemming the virus's spread and protecting healthcare workers' lives. However, the recent renewed surge in coronavirus infections proves that current efforts are unable to staunch COVID-19 transmission. Our organizations, therefore, reiterate our conviction that a national plan is urgently needed to ensure an effective response and save lives. The following three aspects of patient care and public health are essential components of this plan.

First, all health care workers providing services to patients with COVID-19 must have appropriate [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#). The efficient distribution of sufficient quantities of PPE that meet conventional safety standards is a top priority in an effective national response. Widespread and ongoing use of contingency measures to preserve PPE supplies places our healthcare workforce at unconscionable risk.

Second, the plan must address the equitable allocation of other resources. Rural hospitals, community care centers and other resource-limited settings particularly need additional support to care for patients and mitigate the pandemic's impact. Needed resources include:

- equipment, including ventilators and supplies (invasive and non-invasive) and dialysis machines and supplies needed for renal replacement therapy;
- medications to treat and support patients with severe COVID-19 infections, including the necessary medications to provide sedation, analgesia, and pharmacologic neuromuscular blockade for patients requiring mechanical ventilation;
- flu and pneumococcal vaccines;

- clinical staff with experience in critical care.

Systems to effectively allocate resources will become even more critical as a vaccine, or vaccines, to prevent COVID-19 become available, and distribution priorities emerge.

Finally, we demand an unwavering commitment to basic public health measures that effectively disrupt the transmission of the coronavirus. We urge all government leaders to contribute to a national strategy for COVID-19 testing and contact tracing and to constantly and consistently promote community-wide mask use, social distancing and handwashing as minimum measures to control COVID-19 spread.

While we eagerly await the development and equitable, comprehensive distribution of a safe and effective vaccine, our nation must join with other countries around the world in taking immediate action. As predicted by scientific experts, the fall has seen widespread increases in disease transmission with greater social engagement and inconsistent lockdown measures. Growing numbers of COVID-19 patients, coupled with a predictable patient influx from seasonal influenza, will once again stress our health care system and the nation as a whole. We urge you to take immediate action while our members continue to lead this effort on the front lines.

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**About the American Thoracic Society**

Founded in 1905, the American Thoracic Society is a leading global medical association dedicated to advancing pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine. The Society's nearly

17,000 members prevent and fight respiratory disease around the globe through research, education, patient care, and advocacy. The ATS publishes four journals, the [American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine](#), the [American Journal of Respiratory Cell and Molecular Biology](#), the [Annals of the American Thoracic Society](#), and [ATS Scholar](#).

### **American Association of Critical-Care Nurses**

For more than 50 years, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) has been dedicated to acute and critical care nursing excellence. The organization's vision is to create a healthcare system driven by the needs of patients and their families in which acute and critical care nurses make their optimal contribution. AACN is the world's largest specialty nursing organization, with more than 120,000 members and over 200 chapters in the United States.

### **About the American College of Chest Physicians**

The American College of Chest Physicians® (CHEST) is the global leader in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of chest diseases. Its mission is to champion advanced clinical practice, education, communication and research in chest medicine. It serves as an essential connection to clinical knowledge and resources for its 19,000+ members from around the world who provide patient care in pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine. For information about the American College of Chest Physicians, and its flagship journal *CHEST*®, visit [chestnet.org](http://chestnet.org)

### **About the Society of Critical Care Medicine**

The Society of Critical Care Medicine (SCCM) is the largest nonprofit medical organization dedicated to promoting excellence and consistency in the practice of critical care. With members in more than 100 countries, SCCM represents all professional components of the critical care team. The Society offers a variety of activities that ensure excellence in patient care, education, research, and advocacy. SCCM's mission is to secure the highest quality of care for all critically ill and injured patients. Visit [sccm.org](http://sccm.org) for more information.