

SPN Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic

March 25, 2020

The Society of Pediatric Nurses joins other national nursing, medical and healthcare organizations to advocate for the safety of those on the front line of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic response. As of March 25, 2020, 164 countries, 25 territories and all 50 states have reported cases of COVID-19. The emergence of this novel coronavirus has led to an unprecedented public health response of widespread travel bans, school and work closures, and social distancing in an effort to reduce the spread of the virus to protect the most vulnerable in our communities and to prevent overtaxing the finite resources available to treat the virus.

As a member of the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), SPN and the 62 other national nursing organizations representing a cross section of education, clinical practice, research and regulation within the nursing profession, have shared priorities for nursing with Congress during this public health challenge. Utilizing our collective voice to advocate for a number of priorities in the COVID-19 legislative package, these priorities include:

- **Ensuring safety for our patients and nurses** by guaranteeing personal protective equipment (PPE) is available to all health care systems and providers to ensure safe working environments during the COVID-19 pandemic. NCC advocated for the immediate distribution of PPE to frontline health care personnel from the Strategic National Stockpile so that nurses and patients who are being placed at risk for obtaining and/or passing along a deadly virus or suffering other long-term side effects from exposure are adequately protected. NCC also advocated for effective and efficient supply-chains for delivery of essential items throughout this crisis.
- **Reauthorizing Title VIII Nursing Workforce Programs** including Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act (H.R.728/S.1399). This legislation addresses all aspects of nursing education, practice, recruitment, and retention, helping to meet the demand for nursing services. This bipartisan bill provides much needed stability for nursing schools, the workforce, and the community. The bill passed the House of Representatives and advanced out of the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee last year.
- **Increasing Funding for Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development Programs and National Institute of Nursing Research/National Institutes of Health** will ensure we have resources in place to support the nursing pipeline and provide evidence-based nursing care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Removing all Unnecessary Barriers to Practice** allowing APRNs to practice to the full extent of their education and clinical training. Removing Medicare and Medicaid requirements to allow APRNs to practice to the top of their license greatly improving Medicare beneficiary access to care, both for those patients who contract COVID-19, and those with other health care needs. NCC requested the inclusion of provisions that

would remove Medicare and Medicaid conditions of participation and certification requirements that prevent APRNs from practicing to the top of their license under State law, such as, but not limited to, those limitations on access to home health, diabetic care, and cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation.

- **Including the Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act (H.R.2150/S.296)** in the legislative package. Currently, Medicare law prohibits APRNs from certifying Medicare patients for home health benefits and from signing home health plans of care. As the nation continues to battle COVID-19 and experts anticipate there may be a shortage of hospital beds in the upcoming weeks, it is critical that Medicare beneficiaries have timely access to home health care services. This legislation would not only open hospital beds for patients with COVID-19 and other critical care patients, but also allow the beneficiary to remain in their home and decrease potential exposure to the virus or other complications.
- **Including the United States Public Health Service Modernization Act of 2019 (S. 2629/H.R. 4870)** to create a Ready Reserve Corps in the United States Public Health Service Corps. The Ready Reserve Corps would be used to respond to public emergencies, such as natural disasters or pandemics like COVID-19.
- **Funding childcare for health care workers** to ensure government-funded childcare for all healthcare workers dealing with this public health challenge. As schools close and COVID-19 cases continue to increase, it is imperative that healthcare workers are able to utilize government-funded childcare services to be able to continue their work to combat this pandemic.

SPN is committed to keeping you informed about COVID-19 and advocating for access to critical supplies, evidence-based resources and reducing barriers to ensure our frontline clinical staff are protected, have the necessary resources and are able to provide safe and effective care for patients and the community.

Pediatric nurses have always remained committed to serving children, their families, and our communities, especially during times of crisis. We are confident the COVID-19 crisis will be no different. Pediatric nurses will be challenged to support alternative modes of care delivery to meet the social distancing requirements such as telehealth, participate in disaster surge plan implementation and stay abreast of rapidly changing recommendations. As part of the disaster surge plan in many communities, the consolidation of pediatric care at children's hospitals may be implemented to free up beds, staff and equipment in adult hospitals to increase their capacity for more COVID-19 adult patients. As the situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic is rapidly evolving, the following resources will provide the most current, evidence-based information and recommendations:

Official Information from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Taskforce and the White House
<https://www.coronavirus.gov>

Centers for Disease Control Coronavirus Disease Situation Summary

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html>

CDC Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Novel Coronavirus Reports

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/Novel_Coronavirus_Reports.html

WHO Coronavirus Situation Reports

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/>

American Nurses Association

<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus/>

Children's Hospital Association

<https://www.childrenshospitals.org/Quality-and-Performance/COVID19>

As an organization committed to supporting nurses in the care of children and families, the following resources may be helpful in addressing the developmental and emotional needs of children and families affected by COVID-19 school and day care closures, milestone activity cancellation, and social isolation related to stay at home orders.

How to Protect Children

<http://www.calhealthreport.org/2020/03/23/doctors-notes-how-to-protect-children-as-the-coronavirus-spreads/>

The Affect Coronavirus is Having on Kids' Milestones

<https://mms.tveyes.com/MediaCenterPlayer.aspx?u=aHR0cDovL21lZGlhY2VudGVyLnR2ZXllcy5jb20vZG93bmxvYWRnYXRld2F5LmFzcHgVXNlcklEPTMyODg4OCZNRlEPTeYOTgzMDY0Jk1EU2VlZD04MTY2JlR5cGU9TWVkaWE%3D>

Keeping Kids Informed

<https://torontosun.com/health/diet-fitness/heading-out-for-march-break-play-it-safe-and-stay-home-instead>

Boredom Busters: 110 Fun At Home Activities for Families & Kids

<https://familyguide.com/boredom-busters-110-fun-at-home-activities-for-families-kids-2/>

Information for Families of Children and Youth with Special Needs

https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/COVID-19-Information-for-Families-of-Children-and-Youth-with-Special-Health-Care-Needs.aspx?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=COVID-19%3A%20Information%20for%20Families%20of%20Children%20and%20Youth%20with%20Sp

[ecial%20Health%20Care%20Needs&utm_campaign=2020.03.27_CSHCN_Network_Newsletter_Special_Edition](#)

Submitted by:

Kathy Van Allen, MSN, RN, CPN

Chairperson, Healthcare Policy and Advocacy Committee