



Council of Medical
Specialty Societies

Council of Medical Specialty Societies
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June 19, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-226 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-255, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Support for 501(c)(6) Specialty Society Relief in Future Covid-19 Legislation

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the undersigned medical specialty societies, we appreciate the work you have done to provide financial stability for our economy, including support for non-profit 501(c)(3) groups which was included in the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).

As you consider the next legislative package or supplemental appropriations measures to address new and continuing economic and medical concerns related to Covid-19, we urge you to include emergency financial relief and stability for 501(c)(6) tax-exempt medical specialty societies adversely impacted by this pandemic. Protecting the nation's health is mission critical for all CMSS's members, including the 40% of our member societies that are 501(c)(6)'s. Collectively, more than 800,000 physician members across 45 specialties that serve on the frontline of this pandemic depend on our specialty societies, regardless of tax status, for real-time education and timely evidence-based resources.

However, the provision of these critical resources is costly and requires significant staff support and high-level expertise. The breadth and depth of our specialty society efforts during the pandemic include:

- **Covid-19 webinars:** Regular webinars to keep members abreast of the latest developments around Covid-19 and how it is affecting our patients. These webinars are attracting thousands of participants, including physicians, other health professionals, and patients.
- **Clinical guidance for Covid-19:** Dedicated email address with rapid response to member questions, including ethics guidance for our members. Covid-19 resources webpages that are frequently updated to support physicians and patients. Access to these webpages is available at <https://cmss.org/covid-19/>

- **Access to cutting-edge Covid-19 research**: Specialty society journals are providing cutting-edge research and timely new evidence on Covid-19. These highly regarded, peer-reviewed journals have fast-tracked these manuscripts to help accelerate research, discovery, and innovation related to Covid-19.
- **Covid-19 clinical registries**: Clinical registry platforms have been rapidly redeployed to provide evidence for Covid-19 treatment to frontline clinicians and support surveillance efforts with special consideration for patients at highest risk.
- **National Covid-19 collaboratives**: National pandemic response efforts are supported through collaborative efforts, such as joint guidance across professional associations regarding cessation of elective surgery and guidance to relaunch when appropriate.
- **Medical education resources during Covid-19**: To support the training of our future physicians, specialty societies are providing free educational content and board review for medical students and residents.
- **Mental health resources for clinicians and the public**: Our members are providing free resources for physicians, other healthcare personnel and the public to deal with this life-threatening pandemic.

As you can see from these activities, our 501(c)(6) specialty societies are providing timely resources to physicians and patients so they can be best equipped to fight the Covid-19 battle. Physicians look to their specialty societies for guidance and support in a rapidly changing environment. A strong indicator of the critical nature of our role during this pandemic is reflected in this statistic from one of our members: an estimated “90% of our physician members are opening email alerts related to Covid-19 information.” This extraordinary level of engagement demonstrates that 501(c)(6) specialty societies are vital to our nation’s health and well-being.

However, to maintain their vital mission, many of our 501(c)(6) non-profit specialty societies have been adversely impacted by Covid-19 just like other businesses and 501(c)(3) non-profit associations. We prioritized the nation’s safety by cancelling our large conferences and major meetings to avoid further spread of Covid-19 and ensure that physicians of all specialties would be available wherever needed to provide care to patients during the pandemic.

We stand by the decisions we have made to protect the nation’s health, but our specialty societies are paying a steep financial price due to reduced registration revenues and industry support. We do not know if we will be able to access pandemic/communicable disease insurance for event cancellations.

CMSS members are also major providers of scientific and clinical education resources for physicians in practice through Continuing Medical Education (CME). Many physicians depend on our CME courses to maintain state medical licenses. Unfortunately, these critical educational resources have been negatively impacted by Covid-19.

Again, as you complete your work on the next phase of Covid-19 legislation, we urgently request critically needed support for the 501(c)(6) medical specialty societies as eligible entities to apply for

the Paycheck Protection Program so we can continue to serve as a trusted resource for physicians during this pandemic and beyond.

Dr. Helen Burstin, CEO of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies, would be happy to answer any questions at hburstin@cmss.org. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Council of Medical Specialty Societies

Council of Medical Specialty Societies Members:

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Dermatology
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Orthopaedics Surgeons
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American College of Cardiology
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Medical Genetics
American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American College of Radiology
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Epilepsy Society
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Informatics Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Anesthesiologists
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons
American Society of Hematology

American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Thoracic Society
American Urological Association
Infectious Disease Society of America
North American Spine Society
Society of Critical Care Medicine
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
Society of Hospital Medicine
Society of Interventional Radiology
Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging
Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Society of Vascular Surgery