



Position Statement on Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

As the Covid-19 pandemic escalates throughout Asia and worldwide, our emergency physicians are on the frontlines of patient care. To help ensure our health care systems are adequately prepared, governments and other stakeholders will need to make the following changes to effectively address the needs of this rapidly evolving public health emergency.

- To provide access to care for those infected or suspected to be infected, consider alternative testing sites, separate from emergency departments, for quicker, more economical testing. This is to free up emergency department (ED) capacity for those who need it most.
- To prevent cross-infection of patients in the ED and reduce the amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) used, alternative sites of care for patients with respiratory symptoms should be designated.
- Provide public education on importance of handwashing, proper use of mask and control spread of disease by social distancing, when and where to seek testing (including alternative testing sites mentioned above), when and where to seek care, self-quarantining procedures, home care.
- Ensure production and supply chain of medications and supplies relevant to the treatment of COVID-19 is prioritized and that they are distributed directly to needed healthcare facilities. Potential shortages must be anticipated, and alternatives sourced for pre-emptively.
- Securing an adequate workforce should be made a priority.
- Availability of PPE for emergency workers and other frontline personnel (e.g. ambulance staff, clerks, etc) responding to the pandemic must be prioritized.
- Temporarily loosen restrictions on hospital credentialing and privileging and remove obstacles (including medical indemnity and liability) that impede workforce movement across healthcare institutions.
- Pandemic like this is an extremely stressful period for the staff of the Emergency Department. Some of the issues that need to be managed carefully and sensitively especially during emergency times include maximizing the morale, communication from departmental leadership regularly along with welfare activities and provision of scope for frequent debriefs and feedback.

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