



November 20, 2020

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer,

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the 136,700 family physicians, residents and medical students we represent, I write to offer our support for *Protect our Heroes Act of 2020*. Your legislation would seek to increase the production of personal protective equipment (PPE) and improve the transparency of production and distribution of critical supplies that are necessary to helping frontline health workers fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Protect our Heroes Act of 2020* would incentivize greater production of PPE through use of the Defense Production Act along with existing authorities in the Federal Emergency Management Act and the Department of Health and Human Services to press for the development, investment, and production of PPE. The bill would authorize \$5 billion for the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) to purchase critical PPE, including N-95 respirators, gloves, gowns, face shields, and surgical masks – items that are most needed by our nation’s frontline workers.

This is especially vital for frontline physicians as we confront another wave of COVID-related illnesses and flu season. Moving forward, PPE is of the utmost important to frontline physicians. However, 1 in 3 primary care practices consistently have trouble getting PPE<sup>1</sup>, and 33% of primary care clinicians cite “shortage of PPE” as a major concern.<sup>2</sup> While ancillary kits for COVID vaccine administration will include some PPE like masks, physicians will not be provided with gloves or gowns.<sup>3</sup>

Further, the legislation would improve the transparency and accountability of the SNS to ensure the PPE is getting into the right hands across the nation’s healthcare system. Having appropriate accounting of PPE in the SNS is essential has many frontline physicians have encountered challenges accessing PPE from the stockpile along with breakdowns in the supply chain.

Once again, thank you for introducing this important legislation. We look forward to working with you to move this legislation forward. For more information, please contact David Tully, Director of Government Relations, at [dtully@aaafp.org](mailto:dtully@aaafp.org).

Sincerely,

Gary L. LeRoy, MD, FAAFP  
Board Chair, American Academy of Family Physicians

**STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA**

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<sup>1</sup>Larry A. Green Center. "Quick COVID-19 Primary Care Survey." Series 20 Fielded September 4-8, 2020. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d7ff8184cf0e01e4566cb02/t/5f6510dc99d76d706832ba29/1600458973290/C19+Series+20+National+Executive+Summary.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Larry A. Green Center. "Quick COVID-19 Primary Care Survey." Series 21 Fielded September 18-21, 2020. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d7ff8184cf0e01e4566cb02/t/5f75da37bde1f0691fc28b0d/1601559097041/C19+Series+21+National+Executive+Summary.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "From the Factory to the Frontlines: Operation Warp Speed Strategy for Distributing a COVID-19 Vaccine." <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/strategy-for-distributing-covid-19-vaccine.pdf>