AAFP Policy on Prescription of COVID-19 Medications

The American Academy of Family Physicians, which represents 134,600 members, acknowledges the pressures facing the healthcare system to rapidly address the COVID-19 pandemic through testing, treatment, and preventive measures.

The AAFP urges caution as no medication has been approved by the FDA for use in patients who have COVID-19. Further, there is currently no substantial evidence supporting the off-label use of medications, such as chloroquine, hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin, and remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19. While there have been limited studies performed, with varying degrees of success, the data do not support improved patient-oriented outcomes with these medications. Until further testing is completed, the AAFP cautions against prescribing these medications outside of their current indicated uses.

In addition, the AAFP advises against these medications being stockpiled or prescribed as a preventive measure for the public at large. Family physicians should continue to provide these medications for conditions where there are approved indications, such as for patients who have autoimmune disorders or parasitic infections and should not be penalized for doing so.

The AAFP also supports the rapid evaluation of potential treatments through registered clinical trials and calls for the publications of full results in a transparent and timely manner.

The AAFP calls for clinicians, healthcare systems, and policy makers to carefully consider the evidence and effectively weigh the benefits and the harms of any treatment. Given the increased burden on the healthcare system at this time, judicious and evidence-based use of limited resources is even more critical.

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