



COVID-19: SBA loans, telehealth, learner safety and more!

The AAFP is here to support members with tools and resources to fight COVID-19

April 9, 2020

Dear colleagues,

As COVID-19 continues to take its toll on our country and all of you on the front lines battling the virus, the AAFP is here to fight on your behalf and provide you with tools and resources you need to serve your patients and community.

At this week's virtual Town Hall, we had the pleasure of having Dr. Marc Price join us to share what he and his practice in Malta, New York, have been doing to help patients and their community. He provided some great tips on triage, telehealth, community education, financial health and more. If you missed it, I encourage you to check out the replay on our [COVID-19 communications page](#). As a reminder, the weekly virtual Town Hall is available for one [live](#) or [enduring](#) CME credit each week, so be sure to evaluate and report your credit.

In addition to sharing best practices and ideas, we're hearing from many of you with questions and concerns related to access to personal protective equipment (PPE), details about financial relief resources and the use of telehealth. Here is some information and resources to assist you with serving patients and managing your practice:

Supplies and Masks

Access to PPE is still an issue. Please know that the AAFP continues to urge federal and state governments to deliver supplies to the front lines. Over the weekend, the CDC issued guidance for the general public about wearing cloth masks when they must go out in public and maintaining a six-foot distance could be a challenge. We have posted information about cloth masks on [familydoctor.org](#), so feel free to share this with your patients.

Financial Relief

The AAFP has established a new [COVID-19 financial relief page](#) to provide details about the various programs that you may qualify for. One area we've been focused on over the past week is the **Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans**. The application process for these loans opened last Friday, April 3, through the SBA lenders. As expected, it hasn't come without some issues and questions. Some of this is related to the volume of applications being submitted. One piece of advice that has been shared with us is that you will likely have a better response if you work with a lender with whom you already have a relationship.

Telehealth

Between triage of patients who may have COVID-19 and serving patients with nonurgent needs, telehealth visits are something many of us are using frequently right now. From best practices to

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payment to telephone-only visits, we know many of you have questions. We have a [COVID-19 telehealth page](#) that provides resources to help you navigate providing virtual care to your patients.

Medical Learner Safety

The AAFP is always concerned about the safety and wellness of medical learners, including medical students, early medical school graduates and residents. This is even more true as we fight this pandemic, which is why earlier this week the AAFP released the [“Medical Learner Safety and Wellness During Pandemic Crisis” policy](#). Our desire is for medical learners to not only gain valuable learnings from the pandemic but also to continue their programs in an environment that puts safety and wellness at the forefront.

Opportunities to Connect and Help

Many of you have inquired about opportunities to volunteer in various capacities to assist with efforts to care for COVID-19 patients. Since opportunities and requirements vary from state to state, the AAFP recommends contacting your state AAFP chapter, state medical society and state medical board to get connected with volunteer efforts. The Federation of State Medical Boards has provided us with this information that you may find helpful:

- States that have [waived or modified their licensure requirements](#) for physicians to practice across state lines.
- States that are [welcoming retired and inactive physicians](#).

You may also want to register with [Heart to Heart International \(HHI\)](#), which has activated its volunteer roster of health care professionals and is working with International Medical Corps to provide medical surge capacity to hospitals around the United States to fill critical gaps in patient care, nursing, and infection prevention and control.

Before I close, here are a couple of quick reminders of AAFP resources available to you:

- **Webinar series:** Last Friday, we launched a new webinar series where you can experience live interaction with physician experts and have a chance to ask questions. This is a one-hour live, online CME session. This week’s topic is COVID-19 Acute Care Management: An Intensivist’s Perspective, so join us tomorrow, April 10, at 7 p.m. CT. Visit the [COVID-19 CME page](#) for more details.
- **AAFP COVID-19 site:** Remember to visit the [AAFP’s COVID-19 microsite](#) every day as we continue to add new resources, tools and advocacy information to help you easily find and understand what you need.

I continue to be amazed by the strength and resilience you and our fellow health care professionals are exhibiting to help individuals, families and our nation weather this storm. You are making an amazing difference!

Gary L. LeRoy, MD
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