



Minnesota Hospital Association

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April 16, 2020

Alice Roberts-Davis
Commissioner
Department of Administration
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Dan Huff
Assistant Commissioner
Department of Health
daniel.huff@state.mn.us

Dear Commissioner Roberts-Davis and Assistant Commissioner Huff:

As you know, Minnesota's hospitals and health systems did the right thing for our communities, state and health care teams by halting most elective and non-urgent surgeries and procedures across the state in line with the Governor's Executive Order on March 19. As caregivers responsible for our patients' health and wellbeing, hospitals and health systems would like to resume serving our patients with surgeries and procedures as soon as it is appropriate to do so. I am writing to you today because the work that you are both leading around testing and PPE is directly linked to this important decision.

As you also know, hospitals and health systems are under significant pressure from patients and legislators to resume elective procedures which have been suspended since the Governor's executive order. This suspension was designed to preserve precious PPE for our health care workers in order to prepare for a surge of COVID patients as well as reduce exposure to COVID-19 to our patients and staff.

Today, our members are struggling to conserve PPE by reusing masks and gowns and are looking for ways to disinfect them so masks can be used longer. This is not sustainable.

In addition, we continue to experience shortages of supplies that are desperately needed in order to increase testing – testing that is needed for our health care workers and our patients who are awaiting surgery.

I write to you today with urgency to be able to answer the following questions:

1. Without an adequate supply of PPE for even today's needs, when will we have an adequate supply for additional procedures and surgeries and for the surge of COVID-19 that lies ahead?
2. Without a rapid increase in testing and a sustainable supply of testing supplies, how can we resume these postponed elective procedures? Elective procedures will require us to be able to test health care workers who will be in the surgical suite and patients who will be undergoing the procedures.

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We appreciate the work that the state has been doing to ramp-up acquisition of PPE but the following gaps in information remain:

- When are the deliveries expected for supplies that have been ordered? What is our confidence level that the ordered supplies will actually get to Minnesota?
- What is the current burn rate of PPE?
- Do we have enough PPE to resume these needed surgeries?
- What are we doing now to capture the PPE inventory of Ambulatory Surgery Centers in our counts and calculations?
- What is the confidence level of the state in maintaining a supply for the hospital and health system PPE needs of today, the needs for the pandemic and the PPE needs so that these needed surgeries/procedures can begin again?

Finally, Assistant Commissioner Huff, we await additional detail on what a comprehensive statewide testing strategy will look like and whether this will enable us to do the level of testing to resume surgeries – testing both our workforce and our non-COVID patients.

These same questions must also be answered as part of the State's discussion on reopening the economy and business. The decision of restarting elective surgeries is directly related to having an adequate level of PPE and testing availability across the state.

Again, thank you for your hard work and partnership with hospitals and health systems on this urgent public health crisis. I am happy to join a call with you any time.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Koranne." The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rahul Koranne, M.D.