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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AACI Calls for Coordinated National COVID-19 Testing Strategy

In a [letter](#) today to President Donald Trump, the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) urged the federal government to take the lead in deploying personal protective equipment (PPE) to hospitals, establishing a consistent national COVID-19 testing strategy, and managing the COVID-19 testing supply chain.

Signed by the leaders of AACI cancer centers across the United States, the letter noted that cancer patients are particularly susceptible to COVID-19 infection due to weakened immune systems and other complications, including cancer therapy side effects that can cause severe, sometimes fatal inflammation of the lungs or other tissues. Many of these same tissues are affected by COVID-19 infection.

In addition to health vulnerabilities, cancer patients often have frequent interactions with health care providers who are themselves in danger of COVID-19 infection. Thus, the need for widespread access to PPE in cancer centers is paramount.

Due to the outbreak's strain on resources, and fear of contracting COVID-19 at a hospital, some patients have postponed cancer-related tests and surgeries, cancer center directors wrote. Such delays could significantly diminish health and result in more and earlier deaths from cancer, according to recent research.

In March, AACI asked the president to immediately invoke the Defense Production Act to marshal American manufacturing to get critically needed supplies to those working on the frontlines.

With less than two percent of Americans tested for the coronavirus so far, according to the latest figures from Johns Hopkins University, AACI emphasized that cancer centers must be able to test all patients — those with coronavirus symptoms and those without. Widespread, coordinated testing will make it easier to identify those who are infected, help prevent a resurgence of the illness, and give patients with cancer their best chance at successful treatment outcomes.

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AACI is dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer by enhancing the impact of North America's leading academic cancer centers. For more information, please visit aaci-cancer.org.