



May 15, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

RE: Request for Medical Malpractice Insurance Premium Relief for Physicians during Declared State of Emergency

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of the Ohio Osteopathic Association (OOA), which represents more than 6,300 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and medical students in the state of Ohio, and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), which represents more than 151,000 DOs and medical students nationwide, we write to urge you to work with your state insurance commissioner to provide medical malpractice insurance premium relief to physicians who have been forced to cancel or postpone procedures due to the current State of Emergency declaration.

The cost of medical malpractice insurance can run from \$12,000 and \$21,000 annually depending upon a physician's specialty.¹ Although many employed physicians' premiums are paid by their employers, this cost can create a significant hardship for physicians in solo and small group practices. These physicians, who are oftentimes the sole health care providers in rural and underserved communities, may be unable to maintain viable practices due to state orders to cancel or postpone elective procedures to ensure adequate resources for COVID-19 patients and prevent community spread of the virus. In addition, mounting bills and the pressure to return to work as soon as possible may prevent these physicians from responding to calls to volunteer their services in areas where help is most needed.

A number of state insurance commissioners have already acted to waive or suspend insurance premiums during the emergency and for a set period of time thereafter, and some insurers are voluntarily offering this assistance; however, additional action is needed at the state level to ensure that once the crisis has ended, physicians in solo and small group practices are able to return to providing care to patients.

The OOA and the AOA urge you to protect patient access to care by acting to provide medical malpractice premium relief to physicians during the current state of national emergency. Should you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Raine Richards, JD, AOA Director of State Government Affairs at richards@osteopathic.org or (312) 202-8199.

¹ Martin, Keith L. Medscape Malpractice Premium Report 2019. *Medscape*, December 4, 2019. Available at: <https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2019-malprac-prem-rep-6012332#5>.

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Sincerely,



Sandra L. Cook, DO
President, OOA



Ronald R. Burns, DO
President, AOA

CC: Thomas L. Ely, DO, President-elect, AOA
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