



**AMERICAN ACADEMY of
DERMATOLOGY | ASSOCIATION**

1445 New York Ave., NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005-2134

—
MAIN: (202) 842-3555
FAX: (202) 842-4355
www.aad.org

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
The U.S. Capitol, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Democratic Leader
The U.S. Capitol, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
The U.S. Capitol, H-232
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Republican Leader
The U.S. Capitol, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

The American Academy of Dermatology Association (Academy), which represents more than 13,800 dermatologists nationwide, would like to express its appreciation for the recent actions taken by Congress and the Administration to help physicians on the frontlines of care meet the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. Improved resource allocation, regulatory flexibility, guidelines, and financial assistance are important steps that will go a long way toward providing physicians with the support they need to meet the nation's health care needs in these extraordinary times.

The Academy thanks you for your recognition that additional action is needed and appreciates the continuation of this effort through the introduction of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act (S. 3548). Specifically, the Academy appreciates measures to codify the expansion of the telehealth emergency period waiver that allows our physicians to continue to serve patients with dermatology needs. Furthermore, as our members and their practices face financial uncertainty, the Academy applauds the immediate Medicare sequester relief included in the legislation.

While we greatly appreciate the aforementioned items, the Academy also urges you to include additional measures to help preserve our nation's health care workforce and the viability of physician practices during this crisis. Physician practices are struggling to meet the needs of their patients and their staff as they confront revenue shortages resulting from deferred visits and procedures as part of the system-wide effort to conserve personal protective equipment and support the social distancing that is necessary to curb community spread of COVID-19. To that end, Academy urges that you include the following:

- Direct financial support, grants, interest free loans and other mechanisms should be enacted to ensure that the health care workforce remains intact and able to address the challenges of this crisis as well as the ongoing health care needs of all our patients.

George J. Hruza, MD, MBA, FAAD
President

Jane M. Grant-Kels, MD, FAAD
Vice President

Marta J. Van Beek, MD, MPH, FAAD
Secretary-Treasurer

Elizabeth K. Usher, MBA
Executive Director and CEO

Bruce H. Thiers, MD, FAAD
President-Elect

Susan C. Taylor, MD, FAAD
Vice President-Elect

Daniel D. Bennett, MD, FAAD
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

- Postponement of payment reductions mandated by the Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) program.
- Expanded federal funding for paid family, medical, and sick leave, and provide physicians with immediate access to federal grants, interest-free loans, and/or tax relief to help ensure our employees can keep their jobs.
- Insurance protection for businesses who demonstrate significant business interruption and sharp decline in present and future revenue in case of a possible pandemic or epidemic, much like the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA).

In addition, the Academy also joins the larger house of medicine asking that you ensure stable access to critical personal protective equipment and supplies to protect health care workers and support care for patients. Also, we urge you to include protections provided by the Good Samaritan Health Professional Act, which would help improve access to care by providing protections during a federally declared disaster, national emergency, or other public health emergency while respecting existing medical liability laws in individual states.

As a professional society, the Academy seeks to provide a range of educational services and products to promote excellence in dermatology, not only for our members but also to help ensure the patients they serve receive highest quality dermatologic care possible. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic also threatens the future of associations like the Academy and our ability to serve our members in the future. Because of the current crisis, Academy leaders made the responsible decision to cancel our annual meeting, which had been scheduled for this week in Denver, Colorado. The Academy and other associations and nonprofits have suffered major financial losses as a result of such meeting, event and conference cancellations. To help address this need and preserve the mission of our organizations, the Academy would request emergency funding to the association and nonprofit communities so they can continue to support America's workforce and pursue their missions in public service.

The Academy appreciates your continued leadership bringing about the necessary resources and policy changes to bear that will support dermatologists in doing what they do best — caring for patients in their time of need. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Shawn Friesen, Director, Legislative, Political & Grassroots Advocacy, at sfriesen@aad.org or 202-712-2601.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Hruza".

George J. Hruza, MD, MBA, FAAD
President, American Academy of Dermatology Association