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WSNA, WSMA, WCAAP Joint Statement on COVID-19 Outbreak  

Seattle, Wash. — The Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA), Washington State Medical Association (WSMA), and Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (WCAAP), representing more than 30,000 health professionals in the state, today issued the following statement.  

“We appreciate the strong partnership between our state’s health care providers and local and state public health officials. Our organizations are working closely with public health, hospitals, and our members to ensure both providers and patients are adequately protected from transmission of COVID-19,” said WSNA President Lynnette Vehrs, MN, RN.  

“Nurses and physicians are on the frontline of our health care system and will be the first responders as COVID-19 moves through our community. It is imperative that we ensure protocols, protections, and rapid communication with caregivers who are exposed are in place,” said Vehrs. “And we join public health in urging our communities to frequently wash hands, to cover coughs and sneezes, and to stay home when sick.”  

“The Washington State Medical Association extends its gratitude for the tremendous ongoing efforts of our public health and health provider community, who are responding urgently and skillfully to manage this outbreak,” said WSMA President William K. Hirota, MD.  

“We urge all physicians and health care colleagues providing patient care in Washington to follow the recommended screening and reporting guidelines for COVID-19, as well as the necessary safety precautions” said Dr. Hirota. “And please—talk with your patients, answer their questions, and help guide them to accurate, evidence-based information. We are a trusted source of health advice for our patients. As we work to stem the spread of this virus, let’s also do our part to stem the spread of misinformation.”
“In addition, I urge extra precaution when using approved disinfectant wipes, and not to inadvertently mix those which contain chloride bleach with those that contain ammonium chloride. Both of these wipes are utilized in cleaning equipment in our hospitals and facilities,” said Dr. Hirota

"The Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics echoes the gratitude expressed for frontline caregivers across the state working with public health officials to help stem the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. While we are thankful that a small minority of severe cases thus far have been reported in children globally, the situation is constantly changing, and pediatric providers must be vigilant in following screening guidelines and safety precautions outlined by public health officials,” said WCAAP President Elizabeth Meade, MD, FAAP.

“We also recognize that parents of young children are likely to be among the most worried about COVID-19, and we encourage parents to follow preventive guidance, and health care providers to continue to direct families to evidence-based, reputable sources of information,” said Dr. Meade. “Families may be affected by school closures, and it is critical that children with respiratory symptoms stay out of school just as adults who are ill should avoid going to work."

The WSMA, WSNA, and WCAAP are working closely with the Washington State Department of Health and the state’s provider community to ensure health professionals have the latest, up-to-date clinical guidance on COVID-19. While health care providers will be working to respond to new cases of COVID-19, the organizations encourage Washingtonians to follow public health guidance on how to prevent disease transmission:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with tissue and then wash hands.

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About WSNA
The Washington State Nurses Association is the leading voice and advocate for nurses in Washington state, providing representation, education, and resources that allow nurses to reach their full professional potential and focus on caring for patients.

About the WSMA
The Washington State Medical Association represents nearly 11,000 physicians, physician assistants, resident physicians and medical students in Washington state. The WSMA has advocated on behalf of the house of medicine more than 125 years. Our vision is to make Washington state the best place to practice medicine and receive care.

About the WCAAP
The Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics has advocated for the health and well-being of Washington’s children and their families since 1934. The WCAAP represents over 1100 pediatric health care providers from across Washington State. Our mission is to optimize the health and well-being of children and their families while advancing pediatric care. WCAAP frames and leads the public
discussion on child health issues, advances public policy to benefit children, and empowers pediatricians to provide quality medical care.