

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Abbott:

The Texas Hospital Association, on behalf of its more than 450 hospitals and health care systems, appreciates your leadership over the course of the COVID-19 emergency and applauds your announcement yesterday to further protect Texans.

THA is extremely grateful for your work to strengthen the health care system by issuing orders to maximize hospital capacity and preserve hospital staffing and supplies by directing hospitals to postpone non-urgent procedures. We also are grateful for your work to quickly approve regulatory flexibilities on behalf of Texas health care systems. These actions help Texas hospitals be better positioned to handle the increasing number of patients and help free up supplies and staff in advance of COVID-19 patient surges.

Even with these improvements, capacity and the availability of personal protective equipment will continue to be significant challenges as we move ahead. We look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with you, your staff and the newly formed Strike Force on these issues. Texas hospitals understand that the force of your current action is in place, and there is a need for more time and information to determine whether additional steps should be taken.

Given the projections and gravity of the situation, Texas hospitals want to share our firm position in support of strong shelter-in-place provisions to protect our health care workers and the community. Texas hospitals also ask that you:

- Continue to closely monitor capacity, projections, case counts, and spread so that stricter statewide actions can be implemented quickly.
- Be prepared to implement stricter provisions, including a statewide shelter-in-place provision as the situation becomes necessary.

THA is urging local communities to enact strict shelter-in-place provisions, similar to directives announced in other communities across the country. Texas hospitals believe that these strict provisions are necessary to minimize the spread and protect our health care workers. As you mentioned, we will continue to work with our local leaders to maintain visibility of county-specific conditions and weigh in on decisions that are best for those communities, their hospitals and the patients they serve.

We very much appreciate your leadership during this unprecedented emergency. Texas hospitals stand by you as we work quickly to respond to the critical health care needs of Texans and protect our communities.

Sincerely,



Ted Shaw
President/CEO
Texas Hospital Association