



Open letter to G20 Heads of States and Governments

WHPA calls on immediate G20 action to secure personal protective equipment for health personnel

Geneva, 7 April 2020

We are writing to you as the Presidents of the World Health Professions Alliance which represents more than 31 million health professionals worldwide, assembling essential knowledge and experience from the key health professions in more than 130 countries.

We are calling on you, the G20 leaders, to take coordinated action to ensure the security of the supply chain of personal protective equipment (PPE) for all health professionals and healthcare workers on the frontline against COVID-19 and in all countries alike. Only by acting in cooperation, across borders, will we be able to ensure that PPE reaches those who are literally putting their lives on the line to save our people from coronavirus. And there is no room for destructive competition between countries.

Make no mistake, if the G20 does not act now to secure the PPE supply chain more nurses, doctors, pharmacists, physiotherapists, dentists and other frontline caregivers will die, as we are seeing increasing infection rates of the virus amongst these vital staff.

Healthcare staff are understandably frightened both for themselves and their families and despite their courage and commitment, some may seek to leave the profession or take industrial action, at a time when we can least afford to lose them. Those that fall sick are unable to take care of their patients and in some countries the lack of testing means that it is not clear when they can return to work or if they are unknowingly carrying the virus.

We call on G20 leaders, for the sake of all healthcare staff, to put geopolitics to one side to secure the global PPE supply chain before we lose more staff and, consequently, more patients. This would be an essential step you could make collectively to stop COVID-19 and save lives. A cooperative and consistent approach will also help those low-income countries that may be dependent on high-income countries. In the face of a global pandemic, there is no room for national egos.

Please take immediate and adequate steps to reactivate and ensure the supply chains for PPE with speed and consistency, through manufacturing, customs, procurement, and delivery. It is in your hands to do what is necessary – please do it now, before the lives of more health personnel and patients are lost. Any inactivity costs lives.

Sincerely,

WHPA Presidents

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