

July 20, 2020

Bill McBride  
Executive Director  
National Governors Association  
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 267  
Washington, D.C. 20001

***VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY***

Dear Mr. McBride:

The group of undersigned organizations represent providers throughout the healthcare delivery system who have been treating, diagnosing, and staging care for COVID-19, while trying to maintain or restart essential procedures of scans and treatments for non-COVID patients.

Providers are just beginning to address the backlog of patients who delayed seeking care owing to restrictions on non-emergent and elective procedures, which included routine, but lifechanging screenings like mammography, cancer treatments, and monitoring of a myriad of other health conditions. The medical community is working hard to prevent a second health care crisis of missed diagnosis, and a recent study showed that there could be in excess of [10,000 deaths](#) in the country due to delays in cancer screenings. Further restrictions on these types of health care services will only create additional harm in the years to come.

Specifically, we are concerned for patients whose diagnosis requires appropriate imaging such as MRI, PET, CT or screening/diagnostic mammography and may be experiencing progression of disease without their awareness. This can potentially lead to maintaining a dependence on pain medication (and risks arising therefrom) or continuing to stress an injured limb or other body part, causing more serious and potentially permanent consequences for the patient.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues in large parts of the country, the instability of re-opening and again suspending non-emergent procedures, creates anxiety for patients and providers who rely on this care, much of which can be done in out-patient settings. Cancer and other diseases do stop, and imaging should not either. We strongly recommend that NGA encourage all the member governors to consider the consequences of further delays in care for non-COVID patients. Specifically, governors should take action that allows these patients to undergo timely procedures to diagnosis and address health conditions in settings that do not restrict the ability of providers to treat COVID-19 patients.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the National Governors Association and your members on these efforts to ensure access to necessary screenings and treatments, safely, during this crisis. We look forward to your careful consideration and hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

American College of Radiology  
Centers for Diagnostic Imaging  
Association for Quality Imaging  
American Society of Radiologic Technologists  
Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance  
Radiology Business Management Association  
Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging