



April 3, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: Defense Production Act Order for Production of N95 Masks

Dear President Trump,

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to express our appreciation for your decision to invoke the Defense Production Act (DPA) to require 3M to manufacture personal protection equipment (PPE)—but also urge you to expand use of the DPA to rapidly increase the supply of PPE for physicians, nurses, and other frontline health care workers and ensure equitable distribution of supplies based on public health need at a fair price. Without additional action, we are gravely concerned that frontline medical professionals will still be without adequate protection and remain at grave risk of contracting and spreading the virus to colleagues, family members, and patients.

The College is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 159,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness, many of whom are at the greatest risk of sickness and death from COVID-19.

The decision to invoke the DPA to require 3M to begin producing N95 face masks for the federal government is a welcome step. However, given the dire nature described in reports of hospitals and clinics nearing the end of their PPE supplies and relying on homemade and less effective equipment, additional action is required to meaningfully boost supply. [As outlined in our previous letter](#), we implore the Administration to more fully utilize the authorities granted to the President under DPA.

**The College reiterates its call for the Administration to fully utilize the authority granted to it under the DPA to ensure adequate supply of PPE to health professionals and the equitable distribution to those areas most impacted.**<sup>1</sup> Specifically, we request that the Administration:

- Streamline and coordinate the production and distribution process for the PPE industry to better direct supplies to areas and hospitals that were particularly hard hit by COVID-19 and are at greater public health need. In the current environment, states and hospitals are competing against each other for limited supplies of PPE, driving up prices and placing a strain on budgets.<sup>2</sup> With tens of thousands of lives at risk, these critical supplies must be distributed based on public health best practices and the need on the ground, not through bidding wars.
- Address price gouging and hoarding of PPE in the resale market under the authority established by the DPA.
- Issue additional orders to require other manufacturers to produce N95 masks, as well as issue additional orders addressing other types of PPE, like gowns.

ACP shares the Administration's goal of containing the spread of the virus and protecting the health of the nation. However, in order to protect the well-being of the American public, it is critical to ensure all avenues are used, including authorities under DPA, to equip and protect our frontline health workers with sufficient PPE in a timely manner. Without a healthy and strong health care workforce, we are impaired in our battle against COVID-19 and additional lives may be lost. Please contact Josh Serchen, Senior Analyst, Health Policy at [jserchen@acponline.org](mailto:jserchen@acponline.org) if you have any questions or if the College can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Robert M. McLean, MD, MACP  
President

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<sup>1</sup>

[https://www.acponline.org/acp\\_policy/letters/acp\\_letter\\_urgening\\_administration\\_to\\_invoke\\_defense\\_production\\_act\\_for\\_personal\\_protective\\_equipment\\_april\\_2020.pdf](https://www.acponline.org/acp_policy/letters/acp_letter_urgening_administration_to_invoke_defense_production_act_for_personal_protective_equipment_april_2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Romm, Tony, Jeanne Whalen, Aaron Gregg, and Tom Hamburger. "Scramble for Medical Equipment Descends into Chaos as U.S. States and Hospitals Compete for Rare Supplies." The Washington Post, March 25, 2020.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/24/scramble-medical-equipment-descends-into-chaos-us-states-hospitals-compete-rare-supplies/>.