



April 8, 2020

Administrator Peter T. Gaynor
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor,

As you continue the critical task of managing the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we wish to alert you to ways that the 5,800 ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) across the US can and should be used to assist the health care system and our communities in managing this crisis. We applaud the work being done by FEMA's COVID-19 Pandemic Supply Chain Task Force and hope that the task force understands the important role that ASCs can and will play in continuing to deliver care.

The Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA) has consulted with clinical experts in our community and the consensus position is that ASCs can continue to provide safe surgical care for patients whose condition cannot wait until hospitals return to normal operations. ASCs can serve as alternative settings that provide surgical care for those patients who would suffer from a delay, while allowing our local hospital partners to create the incremental capacity needed during these dynamic times. This finding is shared by CMS via their Hospitals Without Walls initiative, which allows ASCs to enroll as hospitals and continue performing elective procedures that cannot be postponed or that hospitals do not currently have the capacity to perform. Diverting necessary medical supplies from ASCs may have the unintended consequences of making this role impossible.

As part of guidelines shared with CMS, ASCA recommended that, while ASCs should remain open for elective urgent surgeries, centers should work within the capacity of the supply chain to ensure that hospitals have priority for necessary equipment and supplies. ASCA also recommended that ASCs collaborate with their local hospitals and health systems to coordinate care based on each community's individual needs. We believe that these recommendations fall in line with the efforts of the FEMA COVID-19 Pandemic Supply Chain Task Force. As the pandemic progresses, we will continue to assess our approach, in coordination with experts throughout the healthcare system, to best serve the needs of patients and communities.

In closing, we stand ready to work with you, state and local governments, and all our colleagues in the healthcare system to provide needed care during these challenging times. If you have any questions, please contact Kara Newbury at knewbury@ascassociation.org or 703.636.0705.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Prentice", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

William Prentice
Chief Executive Officer
Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA)