

Dear Ministers:

It is devastating to us that a disproportionate number of deaths from COVID-19 have been within the black and brown communities of this country. Emergency physicians are extremely concerned about the rate of infection and mortality that coronavirus is having on these communities. We want to deliver a personal safety message to high-risk communities. We know that residents in these communities trust you and that you play a necessary and valued leadership role. This letter is to solicit your support in spreading our message within your communities about their risk and about recommendations to protect themselves. We are asking that you use your various platforms (emails, newsletters, word of mouth, text messages, social media, etc.) to help us get this message out.

Please pass the following message within your communities:

1. Those that are aged 65 or older, those with medical conditions like diabetes, heart disease, cancer, strokes, asthma, and COPD, or those who are weak and sickly are at a higher risk of dying from COVID-19. We must rally to protect them. Help them stay in a quarantined environment. Keep children away, limit all unnecessary visits, drop food and medicines off at their doorsteps while maintaining at least 6 feet of distance. Talk to them by phone or through the windows. It is important to check on them to make sure that they are staying healthy and encourage them to take their medications properly, eat healthy, and get rest. Take them to a physician only if they get ill until this COVID-19 pandemic has passed. Most will be okay if they miss a scheduled checkup appointment during this time. If they need a prescription refilled, have them call their physician's office or the pharmacy rather than go in. Carefully consider any notion of them leaving home or of anyone visiting with them. Most importantly, refrain from visiting in the home unless you absolutely must, because you may be a carrier and not know it.
2. Coronavirus is a disease that attacks the lungs putting people with lung disease at greater risk. Vaping and smoking of any kind increase your risk of severe coronavirus disease and death. Now is the time to stop all forms of smoking.
3. Alcohol weakens your immune system. Avoid alcohol. Please seek help if this is difficult for you to accomplish without support.
4. If you are in good health and develop mild symptoms, you should stay home and take care of yourself like you would for a cold or flu. If you can manage your fever, body aches, nasal congestion, and other symptoms at home, then please do so. However, if your symptoms are getting worse please seek help from a health care provider. You can call 211 to get a referral to a health care provider if you do not have one or go to the emergency department at that point.
5. Close your home to outside guests and visitors. Minimize any comings and goings from your residence. If you must have an outsider come into your home, make sure that

HEADQUARTERS

Post Office Box 619911
Dallas, Texas 75261-9911

4950 W Royal Ln
Irving, TX 75063-2524

972-550-0911
800-798-1822
www.acep.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William P. Jaquis, MD, MSHQS, FACEP
President

Mark S. Rosenberg, DO, MBA, FACEP
President-Elect

Jon Mark Hirshon, MD, MPH, PhD, FACEP
Chair of the Board

Gillian R. Schmitz, MD, FACEP
Vice President

Christopher S. Kang, MD, FACEP
Secretary-Treasurer

Vidor E. Friedman, MD, FACEP
Immediate Past President

Stephen H. Anderson, MD, FACEP

L. Anthony Cirillo, MD, FACEP

John T. Finnell II, MD, MSc, FACEP

Jeffrey M. Goodloe, MD, FACEP

Alison J. Haddock, MD, FACEP

Gabor D. Kelen, MD, FACEP

Aisha T. Terry, MD, MPH, FACEP

Ryan A. Stanton, MD, FACEP

COUNCIL OFFICERS

Gary R. Katz, MD, MBA, FACEP
Speaker

Kelly Gray-Eurom, MD, MMM, FACEP
Vice Speaker

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dean Wilkerson, JD, MBA, CAE

they use a nose and mouth covering and limit their access within your home. After they depart, wash and disinfect any surfaces they may have touched while they were there.

6. Keep your children inside the house or contained in your yard. Playing with the neighborhood children is discouraged. This invites an opportunity for them to bring infection into your home.
7. Wear a cover over your nose and mouth whenever you go away from home. Use a cover over your mouth and nose if you sneeze or cough. If you must sneeze or cough without having a cover handy, use the inside of your elbow to cover your nose and mouth.
8. Wash your hands often to keep from spreading germs. Avoid touching your eyes and face as much as possible.
9. Disinfect surfaces of your home often including doorknobs, counter tops, games, or other common surfaces. It is preferable that you use a bleach water solution or a solution with alcohol. However, if that is not available wash surfaces with any soapy solution you make or have available to decrease the concentration of surface germs.
10. Finally, do not minimize the role you play in keeping our entire community safe even if you are healthy or you do not feel ill. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposing yourself to it. This infection is also sometimes unknowingly spread through people who have no symptoms. Please do it with all you got! Stay home, stay off the streets, stay away from crowds and stay safe!

The Diversity, Inclusion, and Health Equity Section of the American College of Emergency Physicians appreciates your support in passing these messages along to your congregants, parishioners, and community groups. We also ask that you request your members and contacts to pass our message on. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the section at diversity@acep.org.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



William P. Jaquis, MD, FACEP
President



Andrea Green, MD, FACEP
Chair, Diversity, Inclusion, and Health Equity Section

Copy: Aisha Terry, MD, FACEP
Board Liaison, Diversity, Inclusion, and Health Equity Section

Riane Gay, MPA
Staff Liaison, Diversity, Inclusion, and Health Equity Section