

March 31, 2020

Romeo Galang, MD MPH
Medical Officer, Clinical Team
Medical Care and Countermeasures Task Force
COVID-19 Response
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Galang:

On behalf of the nation's obstetric care physicians and clinicians, we are writing to follow up on the telephone conversation between your team at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the leadership of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) regarding the specific needs of those who provide maternity care in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We very much appreciate your willingness to discuss the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for physicians and other obstetric care personnel in the labor and delivery unit, especially during second stage of labor.

As we discussed, physicians and other obstetric care personnel are at risk during the pandemic.ⁱ We expressed to you our concern that CDC guidance is being interpreted as suggesting that obstetric care clinicians need not wear N95 masks and face shields when attending to patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 during the second stage of labor. We appreciate your clarification that the CDC recommends use of such PPE and look forward to working with you to amplify this message. We also expressed to you a general concern about labor and delivery personnel given the heightened risks of viral infection during this time.

As the United States is facing the effects of a global pandemic, it is also facing a maternal mortality crisis. There is already a shortage of physicians and other clinicians trained in maternity care and protection of these personnel is essential to ensuring the health and safety of laboring women and mothers in the United States. We appreciate the CDC's commitment to review and clarify its recommendations in the labor and delivery setting. We also look forward to continuing to work with you as our collective members work on the front lines of this public health emergency to ensure the safe care of pregnant and laboring women.

Sincerely,

American Association of Gynecologic Laparoscopists
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Urogynecologic Society
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society of Family Planning
Society of Gynecologic Surgeons

ⁱ “Labor and Delivery Guidance for COVID-19, American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM (2020),” doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajogmf.2020.100110>

“MFM Guidance for COVID-19, American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology MFM (2020),” doi: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2589933320300367>

“Cough aerosol in healthy participants: fundamental knowledge to optimize droplet-spread infectious respiratory disease management,” doi: <https://bmcpulmed.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2466-12-11>

“A Cough Aerosol Simulator for the Study of Disease Transmission by Human Cough-Generated Aerosols,” doi: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4615563/>

“COMMENTARY: COVID-19 transmission messages should hinge on science,” doi: <http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/03/commentary-covid-19-transmission-messages-should-hinge-science>

“NIOSH Activities: Influenza Transmission Research,” doi: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/flu/transmission.html>

“Covid-19 in pregnancy; early lessons,” doi: https://els-jbs-prod-cdn.literatumonline.com/pb/assets/raw/Health%20Advance/journals/ymob/COVID_Early_Lessons_032620-1585251897613.pdf

“Turbulent Gas Clouds and Respiratory Pathogen Emissions. Potential Implications for Reducing Transmission of COVID-19,” doi: https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2763852?utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=content-shareicons&utm_content=article_engagement&utm_medium=social&utm_term=032620#.Xn048zPgZVA.twitter