

PAA Partners, Healthcare Providers, and our Patients –

We are entering into challenging times. With examples from around the globe it is easy to let our mind drift to the worst case scenario. Outside of military combat, this pandemic has the potential to be unlike anything most of us have ever faced – as clinicians or as fellow citizens. As anesthesiologists we have spent our entire careers training to think of the worst and doing anything we can to protect our patients from it – that instinct allows you all to be the outstanding physicians you are. It is understandable and normal to be concerned.

It is easy to be worried about finances and family, to be frustrated about restrictions to our normal life, to become angry that questions remain unanswered, to rush to judgement about others for a lack of supplies, a lack of protocols, or a lack of understanding on what we are supposed to do. These are all completely understandable; unfortunately, they are not at all productive or helpful. No one planned for this. No one caused it. No one is truly ready for it. Our physician brethren and healthcare providers across the globe are facing the same struggles.

I assure you that PAA leaders (and we are all leaders here) have been, are currently at this moment, and will continue to work hard on behalf of you and our patients. We have been in meetings and conference calls, 3-4 hours on end, multiple times a day, every day this week and weekend. We will need to continue to be the thinkers and leaders through this crisis. No doubt, along the way there are certain to be times when we are without resources we wish we had or looking for results more quickly. We need to realize that we do not operate in a vacuum and PAA needs to maintain our solidarity and continue to do our very best with the resources we have and the situation at hand.

I challenge you all just as I challenge myself. I will readily admit I have had my own personal moments of worry. But this is what we have been training for our whole careers. We are and have always been the calm amidst the storm. We are the beacon of safety. We are the voice of reason. We are the patient's advocate. We have always had the ability to bring down the temperature in the room during times of crisis. We lead others along the way. It is why you are where you are today. We all know first-hand that in the worst of clinical situations, calm heads prevail, are contagious, and lead to better outcomes.

I could not be prouder of the response I have seen and the work that is being done by so many in such a short time. THANK YOU to everyone who has jumped right in. We will need to continue these efforts and have all hands on deck with everyone helping out in some way. If you encounter a problem or think of a question, resist the urge to dump the issue for other leaders to solve – instead, bring it forward and join in to help find options on solutions. We need to present as a united front for our patients, our surgeons, our hospitals, our community, and most of all, each other.

I could not hand pick a group – *a family* – that I would rather be in the trenches with than each of you. Wash hands. Be safe. Continue to look out for each other and our families. We will continue to communicate regularly and share information as we have it.

We are AN UNWAVERING PRESENCE.

Keep Calm, PAA Strong.

James Benonis