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The Rt Hon Matt Hancock, MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health
151 Buckingham Place Road
London, SW1W 9SZ

14th April 2020

Dear Mr Hancock

Our NHS Our Concern is a think tank of current NHS staff and likeminded supporters, whose purpose is to develop and promote efficiencies in the organization and delivery of UK healthcare.

We are delighted that you have recognised the contribution of health staff from non-EU countries, particularly during the current crisis. It is also recognised that we need many more suitable people to provide health and social care. We are therefore baffled that the State levies an additional health charge to IMGs, who already pay their due share of Income tax and National Insurance. This levy is applicable to each member of the family accompanying the employee. We find this to be invidious. We urge you to use your influence to remove this additional levy for the contribution of the IMGs to be truly recognised.

At this current time, we are deeply concerned that NHS front line staff are undertaking care of patients who are either suspected or proven positive to the corona virus without appropriate PPE. Whilst we appreciate that there has been considered review of the PPE needed; front line staff tell us they are scared and are questioning the wisdom of PHE guidelines as we don't know enough about the virus. In particular, frontline staff do not understand the rationale for not wearing long sleeved gowns when caring for possible or confirmed coronavirus patients in all settings. We appreciate that the letter sent to NHS Trusts on 28th March 2020 (reference 001559) refers to the risk of these gowns and cross contamination, but it is impossible for staff to understand this when the same gowns are recommended to be worn in high risk care areas for sessional use. We are asking that the current policy on PPE is reviewed with consideration to recommending the use of long sleeve gowns in other areas. We are certain you will wish to ensure no front-line staff should be exposed to the dangers of the virus. It would be most helpful if a further letter was sent to all Trusts setting out clearly that the recommended PPE guidance is the **minimum** PPE type that staff should be provided with at this time.



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The other issue we want to draw your attention to is the care of non Covid patients with both acute and chronic conditions who are not getting the care they normally would have received. We are concerned that neglecting care of these patients could lead to a greater public health crisis and excess deaths than Covid-19 presents. Whilst we fully understand the pressures and need to redeploy all the staff for front line duties, we do believe that the retired clinicians willing to come back would be of greater help to continue providing care to such patients and we urge you to take further steps to expedite their return to clinical practice and to ask all Trusts to reconsider greater provision of care to these groups of patients as we move towards the plateau of the Covid-19 epidemic curve.

Please be assured that we will continue to support all the efforts in place to manage this current pandemic and we look forward to your response to the three points that we have raised.

Yours sincerely

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