March 20, 2020

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20501

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of Duke Health, we understand you have invoked the Defense Production Act and implore you to immediately use those powers to address widespread shortages of critical medical supplies for the care of our patients, frontline healthcare workers, and community during the COVID-19 virus epidemic. Our health system, comprised of Duke University Hospital, Duke Regional Hospital, and Duke Raleigh Hospital, relies on ventilators, respirators, gowns, gloves, masks, diagnostic test supplies, and other personal protective equipment to ensure a prepared and effective response to the novel coronavirus.

Without access to this critical medical and personal protective equipment, our ability to respond is threatened, and the well-being of patients in need and the provider teams who care for them is at grave risk. Within days, we expect our hospital system to be flooded with COVID-19 patients, and health experts suggest that this public health crisis may continue at unprecedented levels for months. In North Carolina, as across the nation, the number of cases is growing exponentially. More than half the cases identified in North Carolina so far are in the Triangle region and have made us the state’s epicenter of this outbreak.

Please use the powers of the Defense Production Act now to mass produce and coordinate distribution of these critical supplies, before the need worsens and the shortages become even more dire. Our frontline workers and patients are depending on your leadership.

Thank you for taking steps during this critical time to protect the health and well-being of our nation.

Sincerely,

William J. Fulkerson, M.D.
Mary Klotman, M.D.
Executive Vice President
Dean
Duke University Health System
Duke University School of Medicine