



Emergency Physicians Provide the First Line of Defense Against COVID-19 in Wisconsin

WACEP President's Message, March 2020
Ryan Thompson, MD, FACEP

"I have no idea what's awaiting me, or what will happen when this all ends. For the moment I know this: there are sick people and they need curing."

When I read Albert Camus's novel *The Plague* in high school, I imagined that plagues and epidemics were a thing of the past. Surely I would never see one in our modern world! Twenty years later, there is no doubt that we are living with a pandemic, and it is now here in Wisconsin. I see this not as a reason to panic, but an opportunity to use our training and expertise to help as many people as we can get through this with as little damage done as possible, much as Dr. Rieux did in Camus's story.

Each of us has taken an oath to treat the sick, and it's important that we arm ourselves as best as possible to prepare for the flood that may be coming our way. For up-to-date information and recommendations, including practical clinical guidance, I recommend the national [ACEP COVID website](#). For more local information, the best resource is the [WI Department of Health Services](#), which has up-to-date State guidelines and a county-by-county case tracker.

As you work with your hospital to prepare your department, Jeff Pothof, former WACEP president and Chief Quality Officer for UW Health, offers these questions as guidance for discussion with administrators

1. What are our criteria to test someone for COVID19? (These are changing almost daily)
2. What PPE should I be wearing if I'm going to take care of a COVID19 patient? Do PPE requirements differ for aerosolizing procedures such as NIPPV or intubation?
3. Where will a COVID19 patient be admitted in my hospital because other hospitals may not have capacity?

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Career Center



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4. How are we securing our PPE so it doesn't get stolen?
5. Can I travel right now, either professionally or personally?
6. If I care for a patient with COVID19 will you furlough me? If so, in what situations, for how long, and what will employee health be doing? If I am quarantined, will I be paid?
7. Are we looking at off-site testing centers so worried patients don't flood our EDs and Urgent Cares?
8. Is our incident command open and meeting daily to ensure we can meet the needs of our community when we get cases?
9. Is our hospital communicating our PPE and equipment needs to the State so we can ensure a steady supply?

It is imperative that we are given the resources we need to protect our patients and ourselves. Contact your federal representatives and encourage them to pass legislation to boost the availability of PPE and support the front-line healthcare workers facing this growing crisis [here](#).

Finally, remember to take care of yourselves and your loved ones. Keep up the good work in caring for our patients – what you do matters!

WACEP Spring Symposium Cancelled

The Wisconsin ACEP 2020 Spring Symposium, scheduled for April 15-16 in Madison, has been CANCELLED due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WACEP is exploring the option of offering sessions from the Symposium as online, on-demand courses. Details and registration information will be shared as available.

COVID-19 Resources

- ACEP [Clinical Alert page](#)
 - [Personal Preparedness Checklist](#)
 - ACEP members-only [community forum](#)
 - Latest info from [WI DHS](#)
 - Latest info from the [CDC](#)
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