



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

April 2, 2020

Dear Pennsylvania Hospital Administrators, Obstetricians and Midwives:

Thank you for your great work during this demanding time as we work toward mitigating the COVID-19 outbreak. I appreciate your tremendous effort to keep Pennsylvanians safe and healthy while providing quality care to your pregnant patients.

The Department of Health (the "Department") strongly encourages labor and delivery providers to follow recommendations from the World Health Organization and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' (ACOG) in caring for pregnant patients during this unprecedented time, including allowing a support person to be present during delivery. It is important that all pregnant patients in Pennsylvania receive quality care before, during and after childbirth, and that they are treated with dignity and respect.

It is of upmost importance that healthcare providers take all appropriate measures to prevent their exposure to COVID-19. The Department is supportive of policies that protect labor and delivery staff. Without healthy staff, services will become more limited in the state, thus limiting the ability to provide safe care for pregnant patients in Pennsylvania. Providers should utilize telemedicine when appropriate to provide prenatal and postpartum care, and hospitals should take advantage of ACOG resources, including simulations, to train staff and prepare for the potential of caring for a COVID-19 patient during labor and delivery. Additional resources on pregnancy and Covid-19 are available from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Please note that earlier guidance to hospitals from the Department requesting that elective procedures be postponed, does not include prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care. They are all essential to the health and wellbeing of mothers and babies. Please ensure that messaging to your patients is clear regarding elective procedures. As you know, addressing maternal mortality and morbidity is a priority for the Department and Governor Wolf. We will continue to make safe and quality care for pregnant patients a priority in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "RL Levine".

Rachel L. Levine, MD
Secretary of Health