

The South Carolina Society of Anesthesiologists extends our appreciation to Governor McMaster and his task force for their leadership and response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

Anesthesiology departments across South Carolina are responding rapidly with plans to address the surge in COVID-19 patients. Working with our surgical colleagues, we have suspended elective surgical procedures in order to open much-needed hospital beds for the patient volume we anticipate in the next few weeks. Anesthesiology department chairs in dozens of hospitals have led that effort and continue to work with hospital and health system leaders.

The Departments of Anesthesia and Perioperative Medicine are preparing for the expected surge and intake of COVID -19 infected patients, by using information from hospital systems in New York and Boston to increase hospital capacity and utilize staff most effectively. We have begun to implement the conversion of operating room anesthesia workstations into ICU ventilators as proposed by the recent ASA guidelines ([www.asahq.org/ventilators](http://www.asahq.org/ventilators)). Also included in our emergency plans is how best to utilize our staff, such as nurse anesthetists.

Regrettably, some nurses from the SC Association of Nurse Anesthetists are attempting to use this crisis to advance a political agenda focused on independent practice. With operating room volumes drastically reduced and with more available anesthesiologists to supervise surgical cases or provide ICU care, there is absolutely no reason to remove physician supervision. What we do need is more ICU nurses.

Anesthesiology practices across the state are working together to develop best practices and to share innovative plans to deal with this crisis. Physicians remain vigilant in protecting the health and well-being of South Carolinians. As always, we stand ready to meet the ongoing healthcare challenges of our state. This is not the time for political posturing and maneuvering, but rather a time to work together in a physician led team.

## **Laura L. Roberts, MD FASA**

President  
South Carolina Society of Anesthesiologists  
Anesthesiologists  
ASA Alternate Director, South Carolina  
Associate Professor  
Department of Anesthesia & Perioperative  
Medicine Medical University of South Carolina  
167 Ashley Avenue Suite 301 MSC 912  
Charleston, SC 29425  
Email [roberll@musc.edu](mailto:roberll@musc.edu)  
Off: 843 792 2322 / Cell: 843 735 9144

## **Margarita Pate, PhD**

Executive Director  
South Carolina Society of  
Anesthesiologists  
843-697-3114 [mpscsa@gmail.com](mailto:mpscsa@gmail.com)