

## Public Health, Medical Associations Call on Federal Authorities, State and Local Governments to Prioritize Safety in COVID-19 Policies

As leading public health and medical organizations, we represent front-line workers and experts who are witnessing the critical importance of maintaining physical distancing measures until data and resources indicate that lifting them is safe. We call on federal, state and local authorities to adhere to evidence and public health expertise in making decisions on when to lift measures that include shelter-in-place orders and closures of non-essential businesses.

The process of easing physical distancing measures must be guided by regional and local data and preparedness levels, including capacities for widespread testing, contact tracing, patient management and the public health and health care workforces and medical supplies necessary for these critical activities. Fully prepared and strengthened public health and health care infrastructures must be in place. Easing restrictions on proximity and gatherings prematurely can increase the burden of this pandemic by leading to increased infections, illnesses and deaths, overwhelming health systems, prolonging the pandemic and extending economic hardships.

We urge federal, state and local authorities to work together to control the impacts of this pandemic by gathering the evidence, assessing their capacities, and ensuring the resources needed are at hand.

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