A picture containing light, sitting, background, lit

Description automatically generated

Dear Senator Manchin,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with WVNA today. We have conducted our association survey and compiled information from nurses across WV as well as from the American Nurses Association. We are asking for you to please assist us with the following items:

1. \*Support the immediate distribution of PPE to frontline health care personnel. West Virginia Nurses are in emergent need of PPE. Nurses on the front line of COVID-19 units don’t have appropriate protective equipment across the state. Nurses from the following counties’ hospitals and/or urgent cares (front line for highest risk patients) reported dire shortages: Mingo, Logan, Putnam, Kanawha, Harrison, Cabell, Monongalia, Wyoming, Mason, Jackson, Randolph, Marion, Upshur, Raleigh, Berkeley, and Ohio. Home health, hospice, dialysis centers, and ambulatory care clinics from these and additional counties reported similar concerns. Inquiries for PPE that were requested included:
   * distribution from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)
   * request WV construction companies, asbestos mitigation, pesticide application companies, mining companies, and others requiring OSHA PPE in their work donate or sell at FMV their available N95s, P100s, and other PPE to health care providers or facilities
   * instruct all manufacturers of other respirators of equal or higher protection to N95s, such as N99 or N100 filtering face-pieces, reusable elastomeric respirators with appropriate filters or cartridges, or powered air purifying respirators (PAPR) to sell their supply to health care facilities at fair market value.
2. \*Nurses and other frontline health care providers need to have access to rapid result testing if they have any symptoms and/or have had contact with COVID+ patients so as not to take away from front-line care, not infect vulnerable patients, and safely return home to not expose family members. Antibody testing can also show who has unknowingly been infected and recovered from the virus and are likely to have immune protection.
   * Request FDA expedite approval of antibody testing with communication from Federal Government to prioritize front-line health care workers testing.
3. \* Inclusion in daily calls with DHHR. We feel it would be helpful if the State Nurses Association, State Medical Association, State Hospital Association and State Healthcare Association would be included in daily briefings. Our members are desperate for consistent, reliable information which can quell fear and uncertainty.
4. Nurses and other frontline health care providers who contract COVID-19 should be treated first so they can go back to work as soon as possible.
5. Support the immediate distribution of all medications, including respiratory medications, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, allergy medications, cough and cold medications, hydroxychloroquine, antivirals and blood. Facilities are struggling to get medications to properly treat patients.
6. Jodi Biller requested assistance on help with Medicare rules for Home Oxygen – letter attached below.
7. Jon Casto requested support for Senate Bill 3457 – preserving patients access to home infusion, ensure Medicare patients have access to home effusion medications.
8. Expanding telehealth to phone calls for those of us without immediate access to internet or telehealth services.
9. Angelita Nixon and Moira Tannenbaum have requested support on HR5189 – the Babies Act – letter attached below.
10. Put appropriate warning labels on PPE as to when to use and dispose of them (i.e. they become wet, used for x hours, etc).

\* indicate high priority of equal importance

* Charleston area Hospital personal story - “We aren’t allowed to wear face masks inside the hospital, as the management feels it will cause hysteria amongst the visitors. We can only wear them in patients rooms with confirmed illnesses. Also, we are lucky if we get the right masks! It seems that management seems to worry more about giving visitors a false sense of security, than allowing nurses and providers to take appropriate precautions. Providers struggling to get a mask & gown for a symptomatic patient.
* Our hospital is critically low on fentanyl and demerol and our supplier states there is a shortage and a backorder for both medications. Is this a one supplier issue or a national issue? We are afraid that if we run out, we will not have any for necessary procedures/surgeries. Some facilities are still performing elective procedures, leaving it up to the patient to decide.
* Biller Letter
* Tannenbaum Letter
* WVNA Survey

Respectfully,

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated

Joyce Wilson, President

West Virginia Nurses Association

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[wvnurses.org](https://wvnurses.nursingnetwork.com/)

866 986-8773

304 613-5508 (Joyce Wilson Personal) or 304 417-1497 (Julie Huron personal)

Senator Manchin:

My name is Jodi Biller, I’m a nurse practitioner at HIMG in the Pulmonary and Critical Care department in Huntington, WV.

What I do at HIMG Pulmonary is try to keep patients out of the hospital.  There are several components that factor into this, after discharge from the hospital, if a patient cannot see their primary care provider PCP within 7 days, I will see them, make sure they have all of their pulmonary medications (and can afford them), give them teaching, and establish an ongoing relationship with them.  At any point in the year part of what I may need to treat them at home is supplemental oxygen.  This has been complicated by COVID-19 which has known respiratory components.

**The way the Medicare rules are written a patient must have a chronic diagnosis and be in a stable state for Medicare to reimburse the Durable Medical Equipment company (DME).  If a patient is on antibiotics, steroids, having an acute exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, acute exacerbation of congestive heart failure or having pneumonia, they do not qualify for oxygen as an outpatient.   This is problematic for me, because I cannot keep patients out of the hospital without having the appropriate resources and I’m exposing them to potentially infected patients and healthcare workers.**

**What I am asking of you is to please help me change this small rule so that patients would qualify for 90 days and then would have to be reassessed if they still need oxygen.** Patients do not want to be hospitalized if they can be managed at home and we do not have adequate testing in WV for COVID-19 and still must treat acute exacerbations of chronic diseases.

I’m trying to reduce exposure of COVID-19 and manage more stable patients at home.  Hospitals are being penalized because I have no other choice but to send them to the hospital because I do not have the appropriate resources to use.

Please feel free to contact me anytime by my mobile phone or email.  My mobile phone number is [304-972-4036](tel:304-972-4036).

Respectfully,

Jodi Biller, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, CCRN.

Dear Senator Manchin,

In this time of the novel coronavirus/COVID-19, many pregnant women are very scared of going to a hospital. Many healthy, low-risk women could switch their care to a freestanding birth center if more of these were available.

West Virginia has exactly one birth center at present (FamilyCare OB/GYN and Birth Center in Charleston, formerly WomenCare Birth Center in Teays Valley/Hurricane): [FamilyCare OB/GYN and Birth Center](http://www.familycarewv.org/ob-gyn-and-birth-center/)

American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) member birth centers across the country are seeing an increase in inquires due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many are accepting clients for late transfers, including in the third trimester of pregnancy, as long as the client has a low-risk pregnancy, regular prenatal care, and complete records.

Birth centers have taken many precautions to reduce exposure to the virus, including extra cleaning, telehealth prenatal visits, and limiting support people at the birth to two, to name a few.

There is a bill currently in the House (in the Energy & Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health) that could quickly address this situation. It's the **BABIES Act, H.R. 5189,**lead sponsors Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Buddy Carter (R-GA). It would establish model birth centers paying a reasonable Medicaid reimbursement rate in up to six states. [BABIES Act (H.R. 5189](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5189/text?q=%25257B%252522search%252522%253A%25255b%252522birth+center%252522%25255d%25257D&r=1&s=1)). The research into the safety, excellent outcomes, and cost-effectiveness of this model has already been done.

A rural state like West Virginia would be ideally suited to be one of the six states to have these demonstration birth centers. As we all know, numerous WV hospitals have closed outright, or else closed their labor and delivery unit. I'm sure you are aware that Fairmont Regional Medical Center in your home county of Marion is going to close its doors today (March 19), and Pleasant Valley Hospital (in Mason County) closed its maternity unit on February 28.

In response to such closures, and due to consumer demand for birth choices, there is currently a freestanding birth center in the planning stages in the Eastern Panhandle, midwives in Morgantown have discussed starting a birth center for years, and there is strong interest in starting a birth center in southern WV around Beckley.

It seems to me that H.R. 5189 could be added to an emergency legislative package in both chambers to help deal with the coronavirus, benefiting West Virginia moms and families.

An additional beneficial measure to take to help childbearing women now would be to ensure that midwives with national certification (the three main credentials of midwives in the U.S. are CNMs, CPMs, and CMs) are sufficiently reimbursed by Medicaid in all states. Currently this reimbursement is missing for CPMs in many states (and with TRICARE) and for all midwives in most of the small number of states that do not license birth centers (such as Michigan).

I work closely with Julie A. Huron, executive director of West Virginia Nurses Association, and she told me on 3/18 that she was meeting with you on 3/19, so I have asked her to forward this to you. Please know that I am happy to answer any questions or provide more information to you or your staff.

Thank you for your consideration,

Moira Tannenbaum, MSN, APRN, CNM

Editor, *West Virginia Nurse;*

Vice president for government affairs and membership,

American Association of Birth Centers (AABC)

Secretary, WV Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)

[moiratan@hotmail.com](mailto:moiratan@hotmail.com)

(734) 645-2776 cell

WVNA Survey:

* + **I feel prepared for COVID-19**

| **ANSWER CHOICES** | **RESPONSES** |
| --- | --- |
| Strongly agree | 0.75%  1 |
| Agree | 12.69%  17 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 11.19%  15 |
| **Disagree** | **32.84%**  **44** |
| **Strongly disagree** | **42.54%**  **57** |
| TOTAL | 134 |

# My employer supports me in protecting myself and others from COVID-19 cases

| **ANSWER CHOICES** | **RESPONSES** |
| --- | --- |
| Strongly agree | 9.70%  13 |
| Agree | 24.63%  33 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 14.18%  19 |
| **Disagree** | **32.09%**  **43** |
| **Strongly disagree** | **19.40%**  **26** |
| TOTAL | 134 |

# My employer is equipped to handle COVID-19 cases

| **ANSWER CHOICES** | **RESPONSES** |
| --- | --- |
| Strongly agree | 2.99%  4 |
| Agree | 13.43%  18 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 8.96%  12 |
| **Disagree** | **40.30%**  **54** |
| **Strongly disagree** | **34.33%**  **46** |
| TOTAL | 134 |

# I feel knowledgeable about COVID-19

1. ANSWER CHOICES
2. RESPONSES

Strongly agree 11.94%

16

1. **Agree** **44.03%**

**59**

1. Neither agree nor disagree 14.18%

19

1. **Disagree** **23.88%**

**32**

1. Strongly disagree 5.97%

8

TOTAL 134

# 5. What's your top concern with COVID-19?

Hospital transmission

3/19/2020 1:33 PM

Immunity

3/19/2020 1:10 PM

Lack of knowledge regarding how to protect myself and others

3/19/2020 1:08 PM

PPE having enough

3/19/2020 1:06 PM

Working on the front line, being exposed to patients with the virus and not having proper equipment to protect myself and my family.

3/19/2020 1:04 PM

Having enough PPE at work

3/19/2020 1:00 PM

Bringing it home to my family

3/19/2020 1:00 PM

What we aren’t being told.

3/19/2020 12:47 PM

Patient and community safety

3/19/2020 12:11 PM

Adequate protection being provided to health care workers. Screenings have to mandated at all health care facilities. Access to facilities have to be denied to mild symptoms.

3/19/2020 11:23 AM

PPE and strictly limiting /eliminating visitors to the hospital

3/19/2020 11:12 AM

I do not have adequate PPE to take care of these patients. I am an anesthesia provider who will be on the front lines handling the airway management for COVID-19 patients. It is negligent to expect healthcare workers to risk their own safety during a pandemic.

3/19/2020 10:58 AM

shortage of PPE

3/19/2020 10:50 AM

Employee safety

3/19/2020 10:25 AM

Not having appropriate PPE or having such a shortage that we are reusing.

3/19/2020 10:15 AM

Staffing and infection control

3/19/2020 10:14 AM

The lack of availability of community resources for citizens. I'm hearing that grocery stores are running out of essential items such as Tylenol, milk, meats, etc

3/19/2020 10:05 AM

People dying

3/19/2020 9:56 AM

PPE for hospital staff

3/19/2020 9:48 AM

Protective equipment N95 masks

3/19/2020 9:43 AM

Patients not complying with hand hygiene protocols, especially when not in clinic. Homeless patients not having good sites for self quarantine/isolation if they develop symptoms.

3/19/2020 9:41 AM

Mortality rate

3/19/2020 9:37 AM

My hospital does not have enough PPE to sustain proper Infection Control measures. The management is trying their best to get PPE, but it is not available and not being sent to the hospital.

3/19/2020 9:29 AM

Citizens not taking precautions for the long time period they need to. I feel like some are treating the test for the virus as a vaccine. One can test neg this week and positive next week.

3/19/2020 8:56 AM

Limitation of PPI’s and current directives that we will be continuing to admit to our long term care facilities even if the admission is from a facility with positive cases.

3/19/2020 8:47 AM

Lack of supplies

3/19/2020 8:38 AM

Not enough PPE, hospitals not fully prepared, non emergent surgical cases not being cancelled, be mandated at the hospital and being kept away from my family

3/19/2020 8:35 AM

There were only 6 of the N95 masks in one of the largest hospitals in Huntington WV recovery room. During a meeting we asked for more PPE including goggles which is recommended and promised those however those were not available on the unit we were to ask management for them on a case by case basis. I was told not to even wear a mask unless a patient had a “positive screening” which is just a few questions no testing as of 03/17/2020. Family members were visiting in the recovery room all throughout the day and (to my understanding) they had not been screening them at all, only giving them visitors passes as of 03/13/2020. The nurses on my department did bring that to the Directors attention. I’ve been a Nurse for nearly 15 years and I’ve never had PPE locked only given permission to wear it unless I had an explanation. I’m am truly at a loss for words here.

3/19/2020 8:32 AM

Unknowingly acquiring the infection through lack of PPE and spreading it to other. Also delayed response in testing!!

3/19/2020 7:47 AM

No protection in the field

3/19/2020 7:46 AM

Getting Covid-19 due to lack of personal protective equipment.

3/19/2020 7:43 AM

Job safey

3/19/2020 7:31 AM

Running out of PPE. being a carrier of covid since I am a nurse and taking it home to family

3/19/2020 7:27 AM

Not having the proper PPE and bringing the virus to my family. We only have one negative flow room in our ED . Everyone with symptoms should be tested in WV the criteria that needs to be met before the state will run the covid 19 has many falling through the cracks.

3/19/2020 7:22 AM

PPE equipment. I see other countries protect the people who are dealing with in the front lines in full gear I have two mask and a lab coat, masks our good for 10days.

3/19/2020 6:32 AM

lack of test availability

3/19/2020 6:22 AM

The spreading of it

3/19/2020 5:52 AM

Not enough PPE. mass hysteria. Not enough expressed concerns for all ages. This is real for all the people. Not just the sick ones.

3/19/2020 5:12 AM

My employer feels the need to market and charge folks for Covid testing. Beginning tomorrow, they have determined they will bring patients identified by telephone as high risk through the clinic after registering them by telephone and gathering financial information for testing. They equip the APRN and nursing staff or med assistant with a disposable gown and one M95 per day covered with a surgical mask. This practice I s seems illogical when wvu has a tent literally across the street with staff dressed appropriately and of a financial reasoning..

3/19/2020 5:05 AM

I’m concerned there are other ways of transmission besides droplet.

3/19/2020 4:49 AM

Not knowing if or when their will be a new mutation

3/19/2020 3:15 AM

The obtainment of proper ppe and how to protect our own families at home after potential exposure.

3/19/2020 2:55 AM

Treatments

3/19/2020 2:07 AM

Lack of enough protective equipment, Lack of enough testing supplies Length of time it takes to get test results.

3/19/2020 2:00 AM

Transmission to pts who are at risk

3/19/2020 1:49 AM

Safety of staff caring for patients.

3/19/2020 1:38 AM

Too unknown

3/19/2020 1:27 AM

Lack of PPE and working in a facility ill-equipped to care for COVID-19 patients, yet my facility has developed a policy to care for these patients that goes against all evidence-based practice!

3/19/2020 1:05 AM

Not enough ppe,not enough trained staff or prepared areas. Hospitals still allowing visiting hour for people to come on and out and sit in waiting g areas or md offices!! CAMC w&c

3/19/2020 1:03 AM

Not being protected from exposure while working in the ED

3/19/2020 12:37 AM

Limited PPE, mainly N95s

3/19/2020 12:07 AM

having nurses to work during the crisis when the hospital needs health care workers the most

3/18/2020 11:54 PM

PPE, Testing

3/18/2020 11:44 PM

Inadequate supplies

3/18/2020 11:40 PM

Safety and identifying patients with it without proper testing and faster results we don’t know if we have been exposed. Not knowing puts us at risk for exposing our families.

3/18/2020 11:38 PM

Not enough PPE for current or anticipated needs/ hazard pay

3/18/2020 11:18 PM

Healthcare professionals being equipped to take care of these active patients with proper gowns gloves masks and face shields

3/18/2020 11:16 PM

My employer is not protecting us medical professionals. They are wanting to make sure they get their money and stay open but I do not feel safe or protected at my job. I have medical conditions already that I have informed them of and yet they will not allow us to work from home and to top it off I am not a nurse but I work in a medical facility where we were all given N95 masks because we have some form of patient contact and none of us were fitted for the masks. My medical doctor specifically asked about getting fit tested and was told we are limited on masks. We are to write a date on them and keep them in a brown bag for 5 days and ask for a new one. The second issue is we are limited on protective gowns and were told to reuse them as they dont get contaminated during an exam. He will not reuse them, so was then told when we run out you can use your own lab jacket and take it home and wash it everyday. Now you have exposed your vehicle, your home and family. I do not understand why a situation like this medical professionals are risking their own health. Not just nurses but all medical personnel. I know we have to care for patients as we chose this career, but when did we sign up to put our selves in harm's way or to ignore the correct way to protect ourselves to care for patients. In my opinion if you do not have the proper protection and can not protect your staff you need to shut down and let the facilities capable of having the appropriate equipment and staffing available to properly care for patients and not risk more people getting sick, which in turn risks their families as well.

3/18/2020 11:03 PM

Not having enough PPE.

3/18/2020 11:02 PM

Spreading it to other patients without Showing any symptoms

3/18/2020 10:50 PM

Lack of PPE, bringing the infection home to family or spreading to elderly loved ones. Falling ill and not having someone to care for my children.

3/18/2020 10:41 PM

Keeping my patients and ourselves safe and the lack of COVID-19 testing in WV

3/18/2020 10:39 PM

Lack of testing and PPE

3/18/2020 10:34 PM

Lack of personal protective equipment and training

3/18/2020 10:33 PM

Being pregnant and unnecessarily exposed due to employer locking up PPE and only handing out when they feel necessary

3/18/2020 10:31 PM

Exposure to my family

3/18/2020 10:29 PM

Getting the virus and transmitting it to others

3/18/2020 10:15 PM

Lack of PPE. Lack of testing. Lack of ventilators. Lack of staff trained in ventilators.

3/18/2020 10:10 PM

Office closing down

3/18/2020 10:02 PM

Economic impact

3/18/2020 9:59 PM

Not enough PPE

3/18/2020 9:58 PM

Lack of PPE, lack of testing supplies and no one to help us get what we need

3/18/2020 9:57 PM

Lack of PPE

3/18/2020 9:56 PM

Lack of PPE for front line staff, lack of nurse staffing

3/18/2020 9:55 PM

Protecting myself and my family from my job!

3/18/2020 9:53 PM

Death in those immunocompromised

3/18/2020 9:53 PM

People who think it’s an overhyped hoax and aren’t isolating

3/18/2020 9:46 PM

Protection

3/18/2020 9:41 PM

Having enough supplies for staff to use.

3/18/2020 9:41 PM

Inability for the healthcare system to handle large influx of sick patients and unprotected healthcare workers putting their lives at risk with no support or resources

3/18/2020 9:40 PM

Not having enough equipment and beds for patients. Not having enough PPE to protect staff

3/18/2020 9:39 PM

The hospital I work at does not have the proper PPE when caring for patients, not only COVID19. I had a pt that had the flu and there were zero masks in the hospital. It is unsafe working conditions.

3/18/2020 9:26 PM

PPE, we are being asked to use the same mask everyday

3/18/2020 9:26 PM

Supplies of PPE

3/18/2020 9:23 PM

Enough PPE and supplies.

3/18/2020 9:16 PM

That we are not equipped or have the proper Ppe and could bring this home to my family

3/18/2020 9:05 PM

Lack of PPE available

3/18/2020 9:04 PM

I am part of the response team that is trained for epidemic situations and I feel that I am not receiving any information by the state keeping me informed about the statistics of the virus.

3/18/2020 8:59 PM

Lack of PPE, reusing PPE, no PPE

3/18/2020 8:59 PM

Meeting proper equipment needs

3/18/2020 8:51 PM

No N95 or other appropriate PPE available for hospital staff! People are not being tested.

3/18/2020 8:47 PM

Patients not getting treatment they need.

3/18/2020 8:47 PM

Not testing patients who need to be tested and people spreading the virus in healthcare facilities.

3/18/2020 8:45 PM

Proper PPE to protect ourselves

3/18/2020 8:42 PM

the spread and people not taking it seriously

3/18/2020 8:36 PM

Lack of protection

3/18/2020 8:26 PM

Lack of PPE and testing in WV

3/18/2020 8:18 PM

The rate of transmission

3/18/2020 8:18 PM

Passing it to myself and family when I’m not supplied with proper equipment

3/18/2020 8:15 PM

Exposing my family to it due to my work

3/18/2020 8:01 PM

Safety for everyone, pts and nurses. It changes if airborne/droplet. Shortage of masks. Wearing same masks with different patients.

3/18/2020 7:44 PM

Having the proper PPE Equipment to protect myself while caring for others

3/18/2020 7:35 PM

Hospital says there is a mask shortage. They don’t want us wearing masks in hallways,elevators, etc.

3/18/2020 7:30 PM

Not being able to continue to work

3/18/2020 7:28 PM

I am out in a position to test and treat patients without proper equipment in a clinic as a provider by myself with no other provider. We are only using N95 masks (I have not been fit tested) and we have to RE-USE the N95 mask because we don’t have enough. I am scared for my health, the health of my patients and my family. I have to give a 3 month notice according to my contract or I would quit... that is how unsafe I feel. This is not okay.

3/18/2020 7:28 PM

H

3/18/2020 7:25 PM

testing possible COVID19 patients in the same small space as we are treating patients with cold, flu, URI, lacs and minor traumas. I feel this is putting those in our community more at risk. I also don’t feel comfortable that we have the proper protective equipment to be a testing facility. I also feel that because we are very rural, we are being seen as less at risk.

3/18/2020 7:13 PM

Treating my patients

3/18/2020 7:08 PM

I’m beginning to get concerned now and hope that the older population practice self-distancing to allow them to have a chance.

3/18/2020 7:01 PM

Transmission to my family

3/18/2020 6:57 PM

Proper protection for medical staff and ability to handle patient flow increases and proper testing being done.

3/18/2020 6:42 PM

Personal protection for myself, patients and family.

3/18/2020 6:41 PM

Enough Ppe for everyone. Proper screening before anyone enters the Ed. Feeling more prepared than we do right now.

3/18/2020 6:36 PM

A plan if we have a positive case to protect others and ourselves. Will there be enough clinical staff to take care of all potential patients.

3/18/2020 6:30 PM

Testing supplies in WV PPE

3/18/2020 6:30 PM

Raleigh General Hospital is not allowing their staff to take adequate precautions against the virus. We are only allowed one mask per 12 hour shift. We are not allowed to use N95 until covid is confirmed which could mean days of exposure. Nurses are afraid to go to work because of the fear of bringing the virus home due to not having adequate PPE.

3/18/2020 6:29 PM

Admitting patients from other hospitals that withheld info during the report. Patients with temps and respiratory concerns that were not reported to us and we have to rule it out.

3/18/2020 6:28 PM

Knowledge deficit

3/18/2020 6:22 PM

Is it airborne

3/18/2020 6:10 PM

Not having enough PPE

3/18/2020 6:07 PM

People not taking virus seriously and not keeping social distance

3/18/2020 6:06 PM

Getting it

3/18/2020 6:05 PM

Rapid spread. Noncompliance with stay at home recommendations. General lack of education.

3/18/2020 5:58 PM

PPE shortage

3/18/2020 5:57 PM

Not enough people are being tested

3/18/2020 5:54 PM

People are too hysterical and need to trust medicine.

3/18/2020 5:54 PM

Carrying the virus without any symptoms and inadvertently giving it to a loved one.

3/18/2020 5:53 PM

Protection

3/18/2020 5:52 PM

Lack of resources for the vulnerable population of WV