



December 18, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

We are writing to request that the anesthesiologists and healthcare practitioners in ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) across the state are prioritized for distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible. ASCs are currently part of Phase 3 of the vaccine distribution plan under "other clinics," but we urge you to elevate the priority level for these healthcare practitioners, especially anesthesiologists who are at the greatest risk of COVID-19 infection during intubation.

Many anesthesiologists are on the front lines of the COVID-19 – their role as specialized physicians expanded from perioperative and pain medicine to emergency response, critical care, and crisis management. At the same time, many anesthesiologists have been working solely in the ASC setting to ensure that patients receive non-COVID care and surgical procedures. Given that asymptomatic spread appears to be the major driver of transmission of COVID-19 and given the fact that anesthesiologists are intubating patients on a daily basis, it is very important that ASC-based anesthesiologists and healthcare workers are vaccinated at the same time as hospital-based healthcare practitioners.

As hospitals deal with the direct impact of the surge of COVID-19 cases, ASCs can continue to meet other important health care needs of California residents and provide patients with necessary procedures and treatments during the weeks ahead. While our state works to get the COVID-19 surge under control in the weeks ahead, we cannot allow patients' healthcare needs to go unmet – medical care delay or avoidance could increase morbidity and mortality risk associated with treatable and preventable health conditions.

Thus, in order to ensure that ASCs can continue to serve as a critical component of the California healthcare infrastructure, we strongly encourage you to place higher priority on vaccinations for the anesthesiologists and healthcare workers at ASCs. For questions, please contact Bryce Docherty at bdocherty@tdgstrategies.com.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Poage, MD
President, California Society of Anesthesiologists

Michelle George
President, California Ambulatory Surgery Association

CC: Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Dustin Corcoran, Chief Executive Officer, California Medical Association
Carmela Coyle, President & CEO, California Hospital Association
Sandra Shewry, Acting Director, California Department of Public Health