

July 20, 2020

We are the doctors of the Houston medical community, working diligently to keep the people of the Houston area safe and healthy every day. We work within the Houston metroplex, home to the world's premier healthcare hub- the Texas Medical Center- and through our professions on a normal day including staffing emergency and trauma centers, curing childhood diseases, performing state of the art medical research, and treating once-terminal cancers, we make the extraordinary routine and help patients deemed as untreatable cases to find a cure here on a daily basis. The Houston medical community is poised to make a historic stand against coronavirus, harnessing the best and brightest of the world's largest medical center.

The narrative that's been repeated – that we're not ready — is just not true. It's a new challenge for us to answer the call as we always have and always will. We are never not going to take care of our patients and our lessons learned from our first surge of cases along with experience of other colleagues in cities worldwide has prepared us for one of our most defining moments in our careers.

So, we write today to correct the record and ensure that the voices of a few in Houston do not represent the whole. While fighting coronavirus has been tiring on us and our families, it is a challenge that we're ready for and accept as part of our duty and our commitment to our oath in the practice of medicine. But it's a challenge that's been made more difficult because of the incessant spin of fear – which many of our hospitals echoed in a recent press release to clarify our ability to treat our patients.

Congressman Dan Crenshaw has been a steadfast partner in our efforts to protect public health throughout this pandemic. Congressman Crenshaw has been in constant contact with the area hospitals and leadership, healthcare workers, nursing homes, the public health entities, all of whom makeup the vital pieces of our public health infrastructure. From very early on, Congressman Crenshaw was on the phone with frontline providers in the community engaging in first-hand input from those in the battle against coronavirus, ensuring that hospitals had the personal protective equipment they needed. When there wasn't enough in the Houston area, Congressman Crenshaw advocated at both the State and Federal level for more PPE for our community. Congressman Crenshaw even echoed the statements from our Surgeon General- the same statements that have been misconstrued as of late- to save PPE for the healthcare workers rather than have the general population buy up a scarce supply of masks. Later, as supply logistics came into place and as the scientific community began to have a better understanding of COVID19, when the CDC and the Surgeon General started advocating for the public to wear masks, Congressman Crenshaw saw to it that 50,000 masks were distributed to the Houston community.

When many politicians were advocating for national lockdowns, Congressman Crenshaw listened to doctors who were worried about their patients when "elective" surgeries were cancelled. These elective surgeries and procedures were not urgent or time sensitive, but were medically necessary. The very patients who need medical interventions – those with chronic heart conditions, with chronic lung disease, and diabetes, were not able to seek medical care when needed. This has resulted in a backlog of medical care, and in many cases, a worsening of disease severity that has continued to put pressure on our hospital system. What's worse, the economic fallout of the lockdown triggered furloughs or pay cuts due to the restriction on care delivery, pushing medical practices (who already face the challenge of declining reimbursement) to the verge of bankruptcy. Congressman Crenshaw listened to our pleas and acted accordingly.

Congressman Crenshaw has been a leader out in front of our local response, but has also fought for Houston behind the scenes. When we needed additional testing capacity, Congressman Crenshaw, worked with the Administration to make sure that federal support for our Houston test sites were extended three times. When local ER docs were concerned that they couldn't wear their own masks to emergency rooms, Congressman Crenshaw fought for us with the CDC to make sure we got the best information on how to best use PPE. When other hospitals were running out of the crucial reagent to run COVID tests, Congressman Crenshaw advocated for us, the doctors and administrators, and helped connect hospitals with additional reagent so that our testing capabilities would not lapse. When our hospitals were shorted millions in CARES Act funds, Congressman Crenshaw advocated for a fix in funding so that we had the resources we needed.

Dan Crenshaw's stance from the beginning has been based in science and common sense. We saw first-hand the extreme costs of universal lockdowns, and Congressman Crenshaw was one of the few politicians willing to apply common-sense leadership to policy making as a true Texan.

Furthermore, Dan Crenshaw has been unwavering in his support for hospitals and frontline health care workers in Houston from the start of the pandemic. He has helped provide billions in federal resources to boost testing, expand the supply of personal protective equipment, and bolster the capacity of our hospital system. Congressman Crenshaw also personally distributed 50,000 masks to help Houstonians comply with local orders and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

We are thankful for his tireless work, and any notion that Congressman Crenshaw has not supported our efforts to protect public health flies in the face of the facts.

Signed,

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