

A Message to all Physicians from the President of the World Medical Association

Dear Colleagues,

My name is Miguel Jorge, I am the President of the World Medical Association, the global umbrella organization of currently 113 national and territorial medical associations.

Let me thank all of you standing at the front line treating patients during this COVID-19 outbreak. Your work and that of nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and all other health professionals and health care workers is crucial for our patients and for the communities in which we live.

The mitigation measures that have been taken in many parts of the world are now aiming to slow down the spread of the disease in order not to overburden too much our care capacity to care. A lot of measures have been criticized and questioned, but let me remind you all: we are now working on a precautionary principle – applying best knowledge to prevent or at least to reduce damage. It is therefore strictly necessary to support our public health services and to adhere to the precautionary measures that have been put in place. A critical analysis and scrutiny of these measures will be necessary, but that has to come later.

Unfortunately, we have seen the crisis become a breeding ground for fake news and misleading messages. Please be extremely careful and skeptical about all messages, especially those spread on social media. Before communicating, apply scientific knowledge, prudence and soundness of judgement. This applies likewise to any prevention or treatment advice.

This is a moment in which commitment, professionalism and discipline are crucial for the care we deliver to help our patients and for the protection of our communities. I am proud to say that the vast majority of physicians and other health professionals are doing just this. Let us generate people's trust and confidence that we will be there for our patients and that we will protect our communities.