

Friday, September 11, 2020

Senator Joni Ernst
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC. 20510

Dear Senator Ernst,

On behalf of the Iowa Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, we write with grave concern for your comments made last week suggesting health professionals are fraudulently documenting COVID-19 diagnoses for our financial self-interest. We can unequivocally confirm this is not the case. For months, emergency physicians and other health care professionals on the front lines have worked tirelessly to care for our patients, often facing grueling hours, insufficient personal protective equipment, and the stress of potentially exposing ourselves and our loved ones to significant personal health risks. In fact, many physicians and our colleagues working with us on the front lines of the pandemic have taken pay cuts amid the devastating financial losses accompanying the pandemic. Despite the danger and these cuts, we continue to work first and foremost to provide the lifesaving care our patients need and deserve. Your remarks that question the integrity and motives of those on the front lines of the pandemic are deeply disappointing.

These comments damage the public dialogue and create distrust of health care professionals, undercutting our ability to care for patients during the greatest public health crisis of our time. The trust of a physician-patient relationship is paramount to its success, especially when this week's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report shows that 41 percent of Americans have delayed or avoided needed medical care during the pandemic. In order to help our patients, communities, state, and nation fight the battle against COVID-19, we need your support now more than ever. As such, we ask for these unnecessarily inflammatory and baseless comments to be retracted.

In keeping with the ethos of our specialty of emergency medicine, we are available day or night, any day of the week to have a discussion with you (via telephone, video conference or in person) to address any concerns you have about the care provided by medical professionals or our handling of the pandemic at our patients' bedsides.

Respectfully,

[Iowa Chapter of American College of Emergency Physicians \(IA-ACEP\)](http://www.iowaacep.org)

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