



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF  
OCCUPATIONAL AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Bobby Scott  
Chairman  
Education & Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 6559

Dear Chairman Scott:

On behalf of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), I am writing to voice our strong support for H.R. 6559, the *COVID-19 Every Worker Protection Act of 2020*.

ACOEM is a national medical society representing 4,000 occupational medicine physicians and other health care professionals devoted to promoting optimal health and safety of workers, workplaces, and environments. The College is dedicated to improving the care and well-being of workers through science and the sharing of knowledge.

On March 6, 2020, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) received two petitions calling on OSHA to issue an emergency temporary standard to protect workers from the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by SARS-CoV-2. An emergency temporary standard is necessary to ensure the immediate protection of workers in health care workplaces and other workplaces with a high risk of exposure. The current lack of an enforceable standard leaves the nation's health care workers at an elevated risk of exposure to COVID-19 at a time when they are needed most.

Occupational physicians are witnessing and attempting to mitigate the challenges associated with protecting workers from the spread of COVID-19 in many of the most high-risk sectors, including in health facilities. An enforceable OSHA standard is critical to ensuring that workplaces have clear and consistent guidelines and expectations when it comes to protecting their employees.

H.R. 6559 directs OSHA to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard within seven days that sets requirements for how workplaces must safeguard all workers from exposure, to COVID-19 in the workplace. This emergency temporary standard would be in effect until OSHA promulgates a final permanent standard, which would be required to happen no longer than two years after the bill is enacted.

I hope that Congress will seize this opportunity to help protect the lives and health care workers, patients, and the communities they live and work from the spread of COVID-

19. ACOEM looks forward to working with you and your staff in advancing this legislation and hopes that its provisions will be included in any future legislative packages related to the coronavirus pandemic.

Thank you for your continued leadership in protecting workers from the spread of COVID-19. Please do not hesitate to contact Patrick O'Connor, ACOEM's Director of Government Affairs, at 703-351-6222 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Baker MD, MPH".

Beth A. Baker, MD, MPH, FACOEM  
President