

## TRANSLATION

### STATEMENT OF THE SPANISH GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL ABOUT COVID-19

After the weekly meeting held yesterday with the Presidents of the Autonomous Councils of the Medical Colleges, our first thought is addressed to all deceased citizens, and especially to the fellow doctors and other health professionals who died and will always be in our memory, and by the many who are in the ICUs, hospitalized and in isolation due to the coronavirus.

Although progress has been made in all the Autonomous Communities in the last few days in the supply of protection material, we will continue to demand that **#NiUnDíaMás** find ourselves without the essential safety measures that preserve the health of health professionals, of all and in all the practice scenarios (hospital and out-of-hospital, public and private) adapting the reincorporation protocols to basic criteria of health preservation and the prevention of infections. It is urgent that coronavirus infections in the health personnel and their consequences are not a fact that we would have to regret. We request the recognition as an occupational disease of all cases of coronavirus infection.

The evolution data of the pandemic in Spain recommend that we continue to be cautious. Even if we receive data on the decrease in hospital overload and ICU admissions, we have to keep an eye on this decrease in the next two weeks.

We still insist on **#NiUnTestdeMenos**. Access to these tests must be a priority for the health personnel. To control the pandemic, it is necessary to do more diagnostic tests. These massive tests would not only help diagnose people suffering from the disease improving their control through isolation measures and quarantine, but also those who have already suffered it, which will allow promoting actions to face future decisions concerning new outbreaks.

We must not minimize the moment, nor that the lawful desires to return to normality from the markets and the economic sectors take precedence over public health criteria. We must propose unconsolidated improvement scenarios.

Urgent measures are necessary to alleviate the consequences of this crisis, especially for private and insurance practice professionals, who feel discriminated by the State of Alarm Decrees that have a very negative impact on their professional and work future. The Spanish General Medical Council request that legal regulations be enacted so that self-employed doctors can avail themselves of all the measures dictated for groups with cessation of activity, such as ERTE (temporary collective dismissal), aids, subsidies, financing lines, etc. on equal terms as the rest of the companies, SMEs and individuals.

Applied scientific knowledge, humanism in care and treatment, motivation, dedication and commitment of all healthcare professionals, must go hand in hand with protective measures and safe environments that the authorities have to

guarantee and promote with an adequate and efficient management. The values and responsibility that identifies us as a professional group require a correspondence by the public authorities that has not been clearly perceived nor in the terms and times expected by most professional groups.

**#NiUnDiaMás** without a comprehensive emergency plan to reduce the devastating effects of this pandemic on our elders, especially those who are in nursing homes and those who live in isolation and without social support. The first group because of the high mortality rate caused by coronavirus infection, the high degree of infection of their caregivers who, without the necessary protection measures and without adequate epidemiological controls, continue to take care of them with commendable dedication, becoming at the same time contagion agents. The control of this staff and a controlled reincorporation are urgent to cut the transmission chain.

Those who live alone or without social and/or family support because of the worsening of the chronic pathologies that this isolation entails, especially difficult for them. These people have close Primary Care services that we must promote so as not to unbalance our healthcare system. A health-base and community perspective is necessary where public health and Primary Care are given more prominence.

**We call for solidarity** between the Autonomous Communities, their resources and health professionals so as not to leave anyone without the necessary attention. The Medical Colleges have made an appeal to volunteerism. Thousands of doctors from all over Spain have responded. This list has been placed in the hands of the Government and the Health Administrations. They are not just another resource; they are competent doctors willing to give and contribute to society. We are concerned about the low impact this proposal is having on the Contingency Plans of the Autonomous Communities, and we are concerned because recognition of third countries medical degrees are being prioritized, when we have many graduates trained in our medical schools pending to be assigned a specialized training place or to pass this year's exam.

It is necessary to insisting on **protection and hygiene measures**: frequent hand washing, cleaning and disinfection. It is essential to maintain social distancing measures, avoiding close and unprotected contact with people with fever or respiratory symptoms. Filter masks are essential for healthcare professionals and the Administrations must guarantee their supply. The use of conventional masks (surgical type or washable fabric) is highly recommended on public transport, shopping centers or to go to a health center for the general population. They contribute to lower the risk of community transmission of SARS-CoV-2. These masks must not have valves, since, in that case, they do not protect the others. They should not be touched with the hands on their internal or external surface and must be put on and removed by holding them by the ribbons and washing our hands before and after use. They must be thrown in closed bags. Many people are passing the infection asymptotically, hence the need to propose the use of

these masks as an essential strategy. Isolation measures in all confirmed or suspected cases remain essential.

**It is necessary to plan the healthcare scenarios** that we are going to face when the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will decrease. The Research and R+D+i Teams deserve our highest recognition at these very relevant moments, they are also essential for this pandemic to end successfully. Their performance must be recognized and supported by the public authorities as they must receive appropriate resources to develop their important work. We cannot leave that return to normality to improvisation. Human resources, technical resources, enough investment and broad mind are necessary.

We ask our managers not to leave us behind. As General Medical Council, we would like to recall that the Medical Colleges play an important role played of guarantees and close collaboration with the public authorities. We are witnessing a breakdown of the fundamental principle of institutional loyalty between Administrations and professional Councils so necessary in these difficult times. We are all necessary to build the future and put in place all measures to protect ourselves.

Especially relevant in this crisis is the role of **citizens and Patient Associations**. Their messages of solidarity, their support for the health system and professionals, their call for the proper use of the services and their understanding of a situation that deviates the necessary control over their ailments is worth noting. Their contribution to "rebuilding the system" is necessary.

From the medical profession we will continue to defend the quality of care, social justice and ethical practices, because we will all come out of this crisis together.

Madrid, 11 April 2020