April 1, 2020

An appeal to our community:

As healthcare leaders on the front lines of the Coronavirus outbreak, we want to stress the importance of complying with CDC and governmental recommendations to stop the spread of this disease.

This virus shows no mercy. It is highly contagious and spreads before symptoms show. We know that elderly and immunocompromised are most at risk. But more than half of infected cases are in people less than 60 years old. Many healthy 20 - 40-year-olds are among the sick. *All of us are at risk.*

Lincoln County has 13 positive cases through March 31. Eight of these patients have been hospitalized at KDMC, along with another 15 suspected cases *These include ages of 35, 45, 52, 73, 78, 87 and 88 years who have become critically ill.* A surge of patients is expected all across Mississippi over the next two weeks.

As our hospital administration prepares for the likelihood of being inundated with patients, our local healthcare system is already showing signs of strain. KDMC has limited beds, including only 8 ICU beds, a limited number of ventilators, and a limited number of staff. Personal protective equipment and other supplies are dwindling and difficult to obtain. Other larger hospitals will be full as well, and patient transfer will not be an option.

The more we are able to limit the spread of the virus, the better prepared we will be to take care of the needs of our community. We urge everyone in Brookhaven and Lincoln County, as well as our surrounding communities to *begin to shelter in place now - before an order is issued.* Non-essential businesses need to close and social distancing needs to be a priority for every one of us. Wash your hands for 20 seconds. Wash them often, and use hand sanitizer in between washes. Please hold each other accountable and protect each other.

The last time our country experienced anything like this was the influenza pandemic of 1918. Two cities in America made very different choices about how to proceed. St. Louis shut down and sheltered in place. Philadelphia held a parade for those going to fight in World War I. A week later, Philadelphia hospitals were overrun and thousands died, many more than in St. Louis. This is a cautionary tale; let us learn from the past.

Once again, we implore you to do more. *We will* continue to do our part, and hopefully, we will all get through this together. Thank you again to your commitment to our community.
Physicians listed below have verbally committed their support of this letter:

- Mark Barron, MD
- David Braden, MD
- Stephen Brown, MD
- Jeffery Clark, MD
- Matthew Gaines, MD
- Carolita Heritage, MD
- Art Kergosien, MD
- Joseph Moak, MD
- Michael Peavey, MD
- Richard Rushing, MD
- Timothy Shann, MD
- LaFarra Young, MD
- Craig Berteau, MD
- Blaine Britt, MD
- Bryan Calcote, MD
- Paul Dykes, MD
- Leigh Cher Gray, MD
- Mitch Holland, MD
- Eric Miller, MD
- Ray Montalvo, MD
- Asa Reynolds, MD
- Bill Sones, MD
- John Turba, MD
- Jani Purvis, MD
- Jeffrey Boyd, MD
- Robert Britt, MD
- Ryan Case, MD
- Justin Estess, MD
- James B. Hall, MD
- Marc Johnson, MD
- Steve Mills, MD
- Robin Nations, MD
- David Richardson, MD
- Joey Sessums, MD
- Robert Walker, MD