Dear ASVA Members and Virginia Licensed Acupuncturists,

What a challenging year it has been! We are so thankful for acupuncturists who have worked diligently to practice their profession and serve Virginians safely during this crisis. As 2020 comes to a close, Virginia remains under a public health emergency directive from Governor Northam. While Virginia has fared well in overall percent positive on Covid-19 tests, the colder weather has brought on the increased viral activity across the Commonwealth.

As a result, Governor Northam issued updates to several Executive Orders, as well as [Executive Order Seventy-Two (72), Commonsense Surge Restrictions,](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-72-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Nine-Common-Sense-Surge-Restrictions-Certain-Temporary-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-%28COVID-19%29.pdf) which reduced all public and private in-person gatherings to 10 individuals who do not share the same residence. This does not include schools, restaurants, or religious services. It also included tighter requirements for face coverings by all persons above age five indoors, except in your own home, and outdoors if you cannot stay six feet apart. This Executive Order will be in effect until January 31, 2021. For a complete list of Governor Northam’s Executive Orders, please [go HERE.](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/executive-actions/)

With the vaccine now available for distribution, healthcare workers will be in the first wave of recipients of the vaccine. For those who work outside of a hospital setting, the details on where to obtain a shot are still being worked out. However, the local office of the Virginia Department of Health will be a resource for that information. You will find all current information on vaccines and other Covid-19 related issues at the [Virginia Department of Health website](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/), and the dedicated page to the vaccines [HERE.](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/)

Licensed acupuncturists in the Commonwealth of Virginia are considered “essential healthcare workers”, and they were allowed to remain in operation throughout this health crisis. For those of you who chose to continue treating patients, ASVA strongly recommended and continues to recommend that you adhere to the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA) and CDC recommendations, as well as [the safety guidelines for businesses in Virginia](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/Forward-Virginia-Phase-Three-Guidelines-December-2020.pdf).

How can I help state-wide efforts? We have two recommendations! The first is to give blood. The American Red Cross has announced that there is a critical need for blood and platelets due to an urgent shortage. The second is to volunteer with the [Virginia Medical Reserve Corp (MRC)](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/mrc/) – an organization of volunteers who support the community in the event of a public health emergency.

The ASVA Board is committed to supporting licensed acupuncturists through this difficult time. We will continue to monitor legislative changes that affect the healthcare industry in Virginia. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out. You can contact ASVA at acusova@gmail.com.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors

Acupuncture Society of Virginia