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April 22, 2020

The Honorable Eric J. Holcomb  
Office of the Governor  
Statehouse  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797

Dear Governor Holcomb:

As the Midwest begins to see positive results in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, the organizations representing hundreds of ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have come together as a consortium to request that you consider allowing elective surgeries to resume as certain criteria are met.

As the nation has struggled with the novel COVID-19 virus, ASCs maintained their commitment to serve the needs of our communities by partnering with hospitals to assist with surge capacity, providing excess resources, and releasing staff and equipment to aid in the crisis. In March, public health officials in each of our states called on facilities to cancel or postpone elective procedures. While this action was appropriate at the time, it has resulted in pent-up demand of necessary care for patients who may be at increased risk of experiencing a negative clinical outcome. For example, a postponed cataract surgery increases the possibility of a fall and a delayed colonoscopy may allow cancer to grow undetected.

Our shared commitment to social distancing and shelter-in-place actions is reducing the spread of COVID-19, and in many communities we are starting to see the prevalence of the virus taper off. As that happens, we are seeking ways to cautiously resume activities in to serve growing healthcare demands.

The Consortium of Midwest State Ambulatory Surgical Center Associations supports lifting restrictions on elective surgeries as outlined in The White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again, which relies on gating criteria that focus on a sustained reduction in COVID-19 cases. Elective surgeries should only resume if the community is ready. The prevalence of COVID-19 in the community must be low or declining, testing must be available and the community must have sufficient bed capacity and PPE supplies to accommodate the potential needs of COVID-19 infected patients. As our states meet these criteria, we believe that restrictions on elective surgery should be lifted and decisions about care be allowed to rest with the treating physicians, patients and their families, using clinical judgement to prioritize time sensitive surgical or procedural cases.

### **Indiana Federation of Ambulatory Surgical Centers**

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We stand ready to continue working with state and local governments to provide needed care during this extraordinary time. Please feel free to contact our organizations if there is anything that our members can do to assist you as we all face the enormous health and economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Caryn Fink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caryn Fink  
President  
Indiana Federation of Ambulatory Surgical Centers

***In conjunction with the Midwest Consortium members:***

Illinois Ambulatory Surgery Center Association  
Indiana Federation of Ambulatory Surgical Centers  
Minnesota Ambulatory Center Surgery Association  
Association of Wisconsin Surgery Centers