

May 27, 2020

Gary L. LeRoy, MD, FAAFP
President, American Academy of Family Physicians
11400 Tomahawk Creek Parkway
Leadwood, KS 66211-2672

Dear Dr. LeRoy:

On behalf of the undersigned state chapters of the American Academy of Family Physicians, we thank the Academy for its continued support of our collective members' needs, not only during the COVID-19 pandemic but prospectively throughout the uncertain times ahead. It is without question that family medicine's ability to galvanize behind common values and core principles will determine our effectiveness and ability to influence positive change in healthcare for years to come. However, many of our members are hurting right now, both financially and emotionally, as they attempt to combat a virus that places them, their families, and most certainly their patients at significant risk. With this in mind, we write to request the AAFP Board of Directors reconsider its recent decision to approve a \$10 dues increase for the 2021 Academy year.

It is our understanding that the board's decision to approve a dues increase was, at least in part, to offset an anticipated fiscal loss associated with the COVID-19 crisis and the fact that accommodations have been made to delay this year's dues remittance deadline to July 14. While these may appear to be positive decisions from a corporate perspective, it is completely lost on members who have not renewed their membership based upon COVID-19 hardships, including but not limited to furloughs, pay cuts, practice closures, illness, personal loss, moral injury, and more. It also ignores the same hardships of those members who paid their dues prior to the pandemic but are now experiencing crisis-related difficulties. To put it bluntly, the optics of any dues increase when so many are compromised and while the AAFP remains on solid financial footing with significant reserves, could generate irrevocable damage.

It should go without saying that our chapters, which are not increasing dues in 2021, feel the same financial strain as the AAFP during these uncertain times, particularly as we attempt to conduct delicate grassroots messaging focused on dues renewals. Responses have been, to say the least, raw with emotions ranging from frustration to fear related to what the post-COVID-19 healthcare environment will entail. To this end, we believe the slightest perception by our mutual members that the AAFP is more concerned about its own fiscal health than that of their members could be catastrophic from a loyalty perspective. Instead, the state chapters strongly encourage the AAFP Board of Directors to use this situation as an opportunity to publicly recognize their colleagues' pain and show how the Academy is there, as it always has been, to support its members in their greatest time of need by not increasing dues in 2021. Simply stated, it would generate a long-term return on investment that cannot be measured – much like the investments our members make on behalf of their patients every day.

While disagreeing on issues is healthy and provides an opportunity for spirited debate, our unified voice is what supports our collective credibility with the public and our members alike. It is our hope that the AAFP Board of Directors will seriously reconsider the potential negative consequences any 2021 dues increase will have on our members by focusing on the most important element in this issue, supporting the "family" in family medicine.

Sincerely,

The Chapters Listed Below

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Listing of Chapters Who Have Co-Signed Request

Alabama Academy of Family Physicians
Arizona Academy of Family Physicians
California Academy of Family Physicians
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians
Florida Academy of Family Physicians
Georgia Academy of Family Physicians
Idaho Academy of Family Physicians
Kentucky Academy of Family Physicians
Louisiana Academy of Family Physicians
Maine Academy of Family Physicians
Maryland Academy of Family Physicians
Massachusetts Academy of Family Physicians
Michigan Academy of Family Physicians
Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians
Missouri Academy of Family Physicians
Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians
Nevada Academy of Family Physicians
New Hampshire Academy of Family Physicians
New York Academy of Family Physicians
North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians
North Dakota Academy of Family Physicians
Oklahoma Academy of Family Physicians
Oregon Academy of Family Physicians
Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians
South Dakota Academy of Family Physicians
Tennessee Academy of Family Physicians
Texas Academy of Family Physicians
Uniformed Services Academy of Family Physicians
Utah Academy of Family Physicians
Vermont Academy of Family Physicians
Virginia Academy of Family Physicians
Wisconsin Academy of Family Physicians