

Joint Statement: Recent Developments Regarding COVID-19 and Pregnant Women

— April 6, 2020 —

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine are aware that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently removed pregnant people from their webpage that outlines “people who are at higher risk for severe illness” from COVID-19. Consistent with available data, the CDC continues to recognize that pregnant women have been at risk for severe illness, morbidity, or mortality compared with the general population in other related coronavirus infections (including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV). The CDC’s current guidance regarding COVID-19 and pregnancy is based on limited data, which, at this point, does not indicate that pregnancy alone puts people at higher risk for severe illness resulting from COVID-19 infection. Limited data compounded by testing shortages throughout the country, make it difficult to understand the total number of cases and full import of COVID-19 on patient populations, including pregnant patients. Reliable data and testing are needed to make informed recommendations that will have a positive impact during this profound public health crisis.

ACOG and SMFM continue to advise that all pregnant women follow the CDC guidance in preventing COVID-19 infection and take precautions to minimize exposure to COVID-19, including regular handwashing, social distancing, and, for those in health care professions, wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (“PPE”). Continuity of prenatal care and communication with their physician, midwife and other maternity care professionals are essential at this time. Since many pregnant people have other health conditions and comorbidities that may make them at risk for severe illness resulting from COVID-19, consulting with their physician or other health care professional about their particular risk is important to discuss additional precautions that may be appropriate.

ACOG and SMFM will continue to monitor data as it becomes available on COVID-19 and its particular effect on pregnant women. We encourage all physicians and health care professionals to refer any COVID pregnant patients to collaborating registries. These data are critical to understanding the impact of COVID-19 on pregnant patients and their infants. We strongly urge the federal government to support the ongoing development of critical data resources.

We encourage all health systems, facilities, and hospitals to ensure that physicians and other health care professionals have access to appropriate PPE and that steps are taken to protect all health care workers, including those who are pregnant and those who are at high risk for severe illness. We are concerned by reports that certain hospitals and facilities are limiting the ability of medical professionals to publicly discuss their concerns with PPE and testing shortages and are further concerned by reports that some medical professionals are being told that they cannot use personally supplied PPE during PPE shortages. We oppose efforts to repress medical professionals from safely doing their jobs and will continue to advocate for our members during this time.