



March 16, 2020

To Reach Out and Read Medical Providers and Site Staff –

During this moment when you, your colleagues, and the broader health community are focused on preparing to care for patients affected by the coronavirus pandemic, on keeping up with rapidly evolving medical information, and on doing all you can to prevent the spread of infection, we at Reach Out and Read want you to know that we applaud and support you and all your tireless efforts. You are truly heroes in this work, and we are humbled and honored by your commitment and dedication to the health and well-being of our communities, especially young children and their families.

We also know how committed you are to ensuring all children have a strong foundation for learning and growing, and a childhood full of meaningful language-rich interactions with loving caregivers, starting in infancy. The Reach Out and Read program in your clinic demonstrates this, and we are proud to collaborate with you as you integrate the ROR model into your practice, every day. During times of crisis, whether they are individual, community, or global crises, we believe the **Reach Out and Read mission is as powerful and important as ever; it is during times of anxiety when children are most in need of a secure environment, and opportunities for one-on-one engagement with a loved one.** We believe that through anticipatory guidance and books, you can offer parents practical guidance about building moments and routines which will help their whole families manage in this anxious time – and of course, which will help families who are home together if school and childcare schedules change. Reach Out and Read provides one simple reminder that spending time together with books can offer a safe harbor, even if just for a few moments.

We know that your clinics are experiencing tremendous stress at this time, and we wanted to offer some guidelines for your Reach Out and Read program. Know that our number one priority is to support you, your staff, and the families in your care, and we support and encourage local collaboration and decision-making around what is best for your program.

- **Waiting rooms and reading areas:** As we know that many sites are taking increased infection control precautions, we support local decisions around volunteer engagement, visitors, book drives, gently-used books in the waiting room, and other practices that impact the environment of your sites. We as your partners in this work support your choices and decisions. Reach Out and Read encourages local collaboration in these matters, and we support clinic and health systems' protocol for keeping their patients safe.
- **Reach Out and Read books:** We have heard from a few clinics who have raised concerns about whether there is any infection control issue with new books; we are in close touch

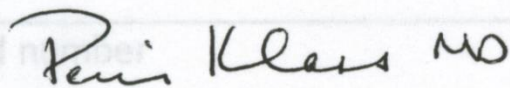
with our book distribution partners and we continue to monitor [updates from the CDC](#), which currently states: *In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days of weeks at ambient, refrigerated, or frozen temperatures.*

Thank you again for all you do to provide access to books and precious moments of reading aloud to children and families in your community.

In partnership,



Brian Gallagher
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Officer



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