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Dear Ask Nurses and Doctors Colleagues (AND) and Friends:

Sadly, another of my long-time patients died yesterday of COVID-19. Again, all alone. I spoke to family -by phone. Starting at 9 am I will start my telephonic phone visits with patients. What are these encounters like? I received an email yesterday which gave a suggested sequence for us health professionals. A heartfelt evidence-based attempt. May be of interest if you are on the receiving end of a telephone encounter with your health professional: **Take a breath before you call the patient. Smile when you greet the patient** (Research shows that people can tell if you're smiling by the tone of your voice). **Acknowledge the elephant in the living room: ask how the patient is coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. Remember to engage the patient in agenda setting. Elicit reactions to recommendations overtly. Shorten your educational spiels.** Break up your explanations into short chunks. Elicit reactions and questions regularly. **Remember that the summary and teach-back are vital.**

Moving to the national level, there continues to be no positive leadership as, thus far, only the executive branch can do this. This despite the fact that two respected Republican policymakers Mark McClellan and Scott Gottlieb (who worked under Trump), have made massive yet well thought out proposals for federal intervention. See past COVID-19 posts for the Mark/Scott's documents at [www.asknursesdoctors.com](http://www.asknursesdoctors.com). <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/07/former-fda-chiefs-outline-plan-to-reopen-the-economy-when-broad-testing-in-place-171344>. Such an effort could be combined with digital tracing. The challenge is that there is little public trust in this administration in contrast to Germany.

[https://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/03/30/science.abb6936?utm\\_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm\\_campaign=bb763e18b6-health\\_tech\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_8cab1d7961-bb763e18b6-152403458](https://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2020/03/30/science.abb6936?utm_source=STAT+Newsletters&utm_campaign=bb763e18b6-health_tech_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_8cab1d7961-bb763e18b6-152403458). The leadership debacle is compounded by the massive number of senior federal job vacancies thus hampering any economic or health care rescue effort.

What can other branches of the federal government do from a health care point of view? The best possible option, though a heavy lift, is both open ACA enrollment and have the federal government help pay states to enroll the millions of newly uninsured.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/07/democrats-medicaid-incentives-coronavirus-rescue-package-173402>. Without this and other rescue packages, hospitals and even outpatient centers will continue to accelerate furloughs of health care professionals, another consequence of federal incompetence. And then this came out today from a left Democrat and conservative Republican:

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-progressive-congresswoman-and-a-conservative-senator-want-the-federal-government-to-pay-workers-salaries/2020/04/10/9287e04c-7ac0-11ea-a130-df573469f094\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-progressive-congresswoman-and-a-conservative-senator-want-the-federal-government-to-pay-workers-salaries/2020/04/10/9287e04c-7ac0-11ea-a130-df573469f094_story.html)

Yes, I am sad as a practicing physician for this almost completely avoidable situation and its not surprising consequences, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the\\_americas/coronavirus-doctors-nurses-attack-mexico-ivory-coast/2020/04/08/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/coronavirus-doctors-nurses-attack-mexico-ivory-coast/2020/04/08/) . I channel any sadness- I don't have anger (<https://www.statnews.com/2020/04/09/doctors-fume-at-government-response-to-coronavirus-pandemic/>) into organizing via AND. I look to all of you for suggestions of health professionals interested in working with me on swing states so that we can win this election in November. For example, Amy Walter of the Cook Political Report today highlights opportunities in North Carolina . <https://cookpolitical.com/analysis/national/national-politics/battleground-north-carolina-suburban-vote>. In addition, I am pleased to be working with the DCCC in a number of Congressional districts.

Of course, family and friends are key at this time. Art is also very inspiring. This article from the LA Times on art at the time of the black death 600 years ago reprises a paper that I wrote for school 50 years ago.

<https://enewspaper.latimes.com/desktop/latimes/default.aspx?pubid=50435180-e58e-48b5-8e0c-236bf740270e&edid=e5c0a00a-0337-4b10-a5ca-7682bda945c8&pnum=31>.