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March 11, 2020

Dear Fellowship Director,

The COVID-19 outbreak, currently described by the WHO as a public health emergency of international concern, has placed us in uncharted waters. We are certain you agree that it is vital for surgical educators and program leaders to protect all trainees from any unnecessary risk. At the current time and out of an abundance of caution, the SCCPDS Board is recommending that all fellowship interviews through April 30, 2020 either be cancelled or be performed using a web-based electronic platform.

Given transmission could occur from an asymptomatic exposed interviewee to others, we feel this protects not only the individual trainee and your program as well as those programs of the fellow interviewee cohort. One applicant exposed, then exposing multiple others in a program, would require multiple trainees on a 14-day quarantine at the same time. I am sure many programs would have challenges if this were to occur. We also acknowledge the increasing numbers of institutions placing restrictions on domestic travel.

We hope that you will take these recommendations to heart. It is our goal to maintain the health of the surgical workforce during these unprecedented times.

Most sincerely,

Kimberly A. Davis MD MBA
SCCPDS President