



Embassy of the United States of America

Office of the Ambassador

Tbilisi, Georgia

April 28, 2020

Dear Minister Tikaradze:

I would like to thank you and your Ministry for the tireless work you are doing to keep the people and residents of Georgia healthy. This is an unprecedented time, and Georgia's strong response to the COVID-19 pandemic is a testament to your leadership and the expertise of your team, including First Deputy Minister Dr. Tamar Gabunia, and those at the National Center for Disease Control. I very much appreciated our last meeting and would like to request a follow-up meeting between my staff and First Deputy Minister Gabunia to discuss developments since then, as well as specific questions regarding public and private medical capacity, in particular for medical emergencies unrelated to COVID-19.

As you are aware, we are committed to supporting the medical needs of Embassy personnel to the extent possible. We understand COVID-19 places immense pressures on the Georgian – and global – healthcare system, and greatly appreciate your willingness to engage with us on COVID and non-COVID medical practicalities. It would be particularly helpful to understand better the state of public and private healthcare facilities that are managing non-COVID related emergencies during the pandemic. Specific issues we would like to discuss include:

- Whether the Ministry of Health would consider requiring formal on-call schedules for medical specialists, including radiology staff to operate machines, to ensure rapid emergency response is available at both public and private healthcare facilities? If so, would there be a mandatory response time for on-call staff after notification of a medical emergency?
- While the government has lifted the ban on driving vehicles, the nightly curfew is still in effect. For medical emergencies during curfew hours, is the government pre-approving a list of public and private medical personnel to ensure they can travel to medical facilities for quick response to medical emergencies?

Her Excellency

Ekaterine Tikaradze,

Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Labor,
Health, and Social Affairs,

Tbilisi.

- Similarly, is there a standardized procedure or waiver that would authorize patients (Georgian or diplomatic) to travel during curfew hours or other restrictions to get emergency medical care?
- We understand that the Ministry is hosting teleconferences with senior hospital management this week focused on Infection Prevention and Control practices for COVID-19 facilities. Will this include discussion of preparedness for non-COVID-19 emergencies at other healthcare facilities?

It would be greatly appreciated if we could discuss these and related issues with First Deputy Minister Gabunia at an expert-level meeting.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my appreciation for the excellent job you and your team have done to safeguard Georgian society. Healthcare professionals are deservedly the heroes of the day. We look forward to continuing to work together in this global effort to combat COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kelly C. Degnan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kelly C. Degnan
Ambassador