**Statement Report and Current Unmet Needs for The Recognition of COVID-19 Disease as an Occupational Disease in Healthcare Workers in Turkey**

During the pandemic of COVID-19, there are an increasing number of infected and unfortunately dead health care workers due to COVID-19 disease all around the world. In Turkey, Health Minister has announced recently that the rate of health care workers in currently infected patients in Turkey was 6.5 % of all cases, and there were colleagues who lost their life due to COVID-19.

However, we have not an official and legal regulation in our country for this current transmittable viral infection and to the related serious COVID-19 disease in the situation of health care workers. This infection has been defined as an occupational disease due to the exposure occurred in workplace environment in many country such as Italy, Germany, South Africa, Canada, Malaysia and USA. We also strongly support this situation.

We would like to emphasize that in the situation of health care workers, COVID-19 infection should be accepted occupational disease since they have to go to hospitals and to other health care settings and they face to COVID-19 infected patients by nature of their work.

According to World Health Organization, health care workers have the right of the compensation of the damage, and their treatment and rehabilitation should be provided.

 We have already asked the ministry of health, to have an urgent legal regulation for health care workers in Turkey, in case of an infection due to SARS-CoV-2 virus but could not get an answer. COVID-19 infection occurred in health care worker must be recognized by the social security institution as an occupational disease if documented by an official report approved by the treating physician as in other countries facing the serious effect of this pandemic. In case of a COVID-19 disease is detected clinically and confirmed by current accepted case definition for COVID-19 disease in health professionals working in both public institutions and private health institutions, it should be considered an occupational disease by the Social Security Institution and the Ministry of Health. So, we have to emphasize the unmet and urgent needs in terms of the healthcare employees rights in this coronavirus pandemic, which is a direct risk of infection for health professionals by the nature of their work. We think that we have to unite as national and international specialists organizations to empower our occupational safety and immediate legal regulation need for COVID-19 infection to be considered an occupational disease for national health authorithies and social security institutions.

*This letter is prepared based upon the “Statement Report of Turkish Thoracic Society on The Recognition of COVID-19 Disease as an Occupational Disease in Healthcare Workers in Turkey”*