Joint Statement from Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association
President Ian N. Friedman and CEO Rebecca Ruppert McMahon
Regarding COVID-19

CLEVELAND – March 16, 2020 - Last week, following careful review and reflection of the current data related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association made the decision to convert our operations to a virtual, technology-supported environment for at least the next three weeks. We did so because we believe all available protective measures must be taken to minimize the unnecessary spreading of this potentially life-threatening virus to our staff, our members and the general public.

While judicial leaders have carefully worked to respond to this public threat, out of concern for our members, the legal community, clients, court staff and the community-at-large, the CMBA calls for an immediate cessation of all nonessential court appearances and the implementation of continuances of all nonessential matters in all courts. To date, different courts have taken various steps, adding to the uncertainty already created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Responsive actions must be uniformly followed at all levels of our judicial system, including the federal courts, county common pleas courts, suburban courts and mayor’s courts that make up our region.

Moreover, all nonessential out-of-court matters that would put individuals in danger of contamination, including but not limited to, depositions, arbitrations and other
legal processes should be rescheduled to a later date if unable to conduct by electronic means. We strongly encourage all lawyers and law firms to have employees work remotely and to follow the protocols set forth by Gov. Mike DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health as set forth on the ODH website which can be visited at www.odh.ohio.gov. Affording additional time to parties until the gravity of this health crisis can be fully understood will significantly help to minimize the threats as we know them to date.

Now is the time for the entire legal community to come together in support of one another. The CMBA will continue to serve as a resource to assist with the needs of all legal and community members by posting the latest COVID-19 data and court closures and/or adjustments to our website which can be visited at www.clemetrobar.org.

We hope everyone will join us in doing our part to stay healthy and to reduce the risk that any of us will unintentionally spread COVID-19.

About the CMBA

The nonprofit Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association operates as a center for legal professionalism in the region, promoting the highest ethical and professional standards. The CMBA strives to be an indispensable resource for its 5,200 members and the go-to organization on issues of law and justice in Northeast Ohio. Learn more at www.CleMetroBar.org.

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