



American Medical Women's Association  
The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS**

**CONTACT:** Charlotte Tomic  
Director of Public Relations  
American Medical Women's Association (AMWA)  
[charlotte@tomiccommunications.com](mailto:charlotte@tomiccommunications.com) 917-882-5243

### **AMWA AND THE ROBONAUTS PARTNER TO PRODUCE PPE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS**

Nationwide, healthcare workers continue to face shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE). The American Medical Women's Association has joined efforts with The Robonauts, a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded to teach STEM and leadership skills to young learners, to help provide 3-D printed face shields to healthcare providers around the country.

The partnership was launched by Michelle Benedict, Director of Research and Development at AMWA, who also helped accelerate 3-D PPE printing efforts at the University of Michigan Medical School. Ms. Benedict states, "At this time, many people feel helpless-- whether from falling ill, not having enough personal protective equipment, or being distanced from the myriad of people and places they love. It is incumbent on everyone to join the fight to help one another. That means being creative about what you can offer the world. You don't have to be working on the frontlines to make a difference. We have seen such an inspirational insurgence of 'makers' around the country learning to, for the first time, or extending their printing expertise to help healthcare workers."

Sophia Shams, founder of The Robonauts and an AMWA premed member, is also a member of Space Cookies, a First Robotics Competition Team 1868 created through a partnership between NASA and Girl Scouts. Ms. Shams states, "The Robonauts feel a profound responsibility in helping to combat COVID-19 during this critical time. We are thankful to our donors and volunteers who enable us to support our Healthcare Heroes. Our team consists of High School and Middle School students volunteering their time to print these much needed PPE. We hope to partner with industry leaders to mass produce these much needed supplies."

The project is overseen by an advisory board consisting of Leigh McMullen (VP, Distinguished Analyst and Fellow, Gartner), Michelle Benedict (Director of Research and Development, AMWA), John Shuniya (Senior Buyer, Ford Motor Company), Mary Hoban (Financial Analyst, Hendrick Health System), and Khawaja Shams (Senior Director of Engineering, Google).

Recipients of the face shields to date have ranged from large tertiary care ICUs and surgical units, pediatric oncology centers, and adult residential facilities for the developmentally disabled.

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Two Woodfield Lake • 1100 E Woodfield Road, Suite 350 • Schaumburg, IL 60173 • Telephone (847) 517-2801 •  
Fax: (847) 517-7229 • [www.amwa-doc.org](http://www.amwa-doc.org)



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Dr. Eliza Chin, AMWA Executive Director, states, “This initiative is a reminder of the importance of cross-sector partnerships in the global fight against COVID-19. We are so thankful to The Robonauts for helping us meet this vital need.”

Funding for this initiative has been supported by community donors through GoFundMe and a grant from the American Women’s Hospitals Service, a program of AMWA that has supported global health efforts and answered the call for service since 1917.

More information is available at [bit.ly/amwarobonauts](http://bit.ly/amwarobonauts).  
To support this effort, visit [bit.ly/amwappe](http://bit.ly/amwappe).

**ABOUT AMWA:** Founded in 1915, the American Medical Women’s Association functions at the local, nation, and international level to advance women in medicine, advocate for equity, and ensure excellence in health care. For more information, visit [amwa-doc.org](http://amwa-doc.org).

**ABOUT THE ROBONAUTS:** Based in Los Altos, California, The Robonauts’ mission is to teach K-12 students STEM skills using robotics. They teach leadership through the STEMup program and They teach leadership through their STEMup program and create volunteering opportunities to address community needs. For more information, visit [www.therobonauts.org](http://www.therobonauts.org).

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