

March 27, 2020

Richard J. Pollack
President and Chief Executive Officer
American Hospital Association
800 10th Street, N.W.
Two CityCenter, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20001-4956
Delivered by email to rick@aha.org

Dear Mr. Pollack:

We were appalled to read recent media reports about hospital administrators across the U.S. muzzling doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals with threats of disciplinary action for speaking out about coronavirus patient caseloads and dwindling hospital supplies needed to care for such patients.¹

It is critical that the public and local, state, and federal government officials fully comprehend the scope of shortages of personal protective equipment, mechanical ventilators, intensive care unit beds, and other medical supplies so that appropriate steps can be taken to mitigate shortages of these essential medical resources, appropriately and fairly allocate limited resources, and thus protect the safety and welfare of health care workers and patients alike.

Attempts to cover up these shortages by muzzling health care workers who are on the front lines of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic are reprehensible and reckless and endanger public health. Although such actions may be commonplace in countries with authoritarian regimes, they are not acceptable in the U.S.

The undersigned consumer advocacy, workers' rights, science, research, public health, civil rights, human rights, and grassroots political organizations, labor unions, and individuals therefore demand that the American Hospital Association publicly denounce any such efforts to muzzle health care professionals and call on its member hospitals and health care systems to encourage their doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals to speak freely about coronavirus patient caseloads, dwindling hospital supplies, and any other challenges that should be immediately addressed.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent public health matter. Please contact Dr. Michael Carome, Director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group, at mcarome@citizen.org with your response.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Retired Americans
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Teachers

¹ See <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/927541> and <https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/927528>.

American Medical Student Association
American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)
BlueGreen Alliance
Business for Medicare for All
Center for Reproductive Rights
Communications Workers of America
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Consumer Action
Debs-Jones-Douglass Institute
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Doctors for America
Equality North Carolina
Glenn Paulson, Ph.D., BCES, Sc.D. (Hon.), Retired Professor, George Washington University,
Milken Institute School of Public Health
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of
America, (UAW)
IUE-CWA
Justice at Work
Knowledge Ecology International
Labor of Love Safety Training and Consulting (Diane Matthew Brown, CIT)
Martin S. Kanovsky, M.D., FACP, FACC, FASNC, FASE
Mary E Miller, R.N., M.N., Occupational Health Nurse
MassCOSH
Medicare for All Now
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Center for Health Research
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Employment Law Project
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Nurses United
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Health Network
New Solutions: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy
People's Action
PhilaPOSH
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Progress America
Progressive Democrats of America
Progressive Doctors
Public Advocacy for Kids
Public Citizen
Public Justice Center
Right Care Alliance

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Letter to the American Hospital Association

SafeWork Washington
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Social Security Works
The International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
United Steelworkers
Universal Health Care Action Network
V. Ram Krishnamoorthi, M.D., M.P.H., Chicago, Illinois
Virginia Organizing
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety & Health
Worksafe