

March 27, 2020

Michael A. Carome, M.D.
Director, Health Research Group
Public Citizen
1600 20th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Dr. Carome:

Thank you for your recent letter. I appreciate your concern for America's patients, frontline health care providers, and the hospitals and health systems that are critical to our country's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the American Hospital Association (AHA), our top concern is the health and safety of patients and the physicians, nurses and clinicians who care for them.

As you know, our health care system is being challenged like never before, and the shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators is putting even more stress on health care providers. From the beginning of this pandemic, the AHA has been sounding the alarm to government leaders — including Vice President Mike Pence, the White House Coronavirus Task Force, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency — about the dire shortage of PPE. We continue to work with the federal government on increasing supplies of these vital resources. That's why the AHA joined with the American Medical Association and the American Nurses Association to call for the use of the Defense Production Act to increase the production of medical supplies and equipment. Additionally, this week we launched the [100 Million Masks Challenge](#) to engage manufacturers and community partners across the country to help ensure our supply of masks and other PPE meets providers' needs.

Outside of the anecdotal reports you shared, the AHA has not heard any reports of hospitals or health systems restricting the free speech of physicians, nurses or others regarding the conditions related to COVID-19. Furthermore, numerous clinicians have spoken to the media about conditions on the ground and we see their stories appear on the news and in articles and social media regularly.



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Ensuring the public knows the challenges our hospitals, health systems and providers face – the need for PPE and how important it is to follow public health officials' advice to stay home, practice social distancing and only go to the hospital with COVID-19 symptoms after consulting with a health care provider— is vital to flattening the curve so we can stop the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.

Thank you for taking this matter seriously and for joining us in standing up for America's health care heroes. The success we have in saving the lives of patients stricken with the worst cases of COVID-19 and stopping the spread of COVID-19 will be because of their dedication and care.

Sincerely,

/s/

Richard J. Pollack
President and CEO
American Hospital Association