



June 11, 2020

House Public Health and Human Services Committee
200 E Colfax Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203
RE: HB 20-1425- via Electronic Submission

Members of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee:

Colorado Hospital Association (CHA) and Colorado Medical Society (CMS) have quickly reviewed House Bill (HB) 20-1425 and respectfully urge the Committee to vote no on the legislation. Hospitals and physicians take the welfare of our patients and their families very seriously, and continue to do everything in our power to protect everyone who walks through our doors—including our frontline personnel who have put themselves at great risk to continue caring for patients throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospital inpatients have visitation rights, which is why Medicare Conditions of Participation (COP) mandate all hospitals have visitation policies. However, during a global pandemic transmitted through respiratory droplets, having large numbers of visitors coming into hospitals place patients and staff at greater risk for transmission and place additional stress on already limited supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE). That is why those very same COPs allow hospitals to include “any clinically necessary or reasonable restriction or limitation that the hospital may impose.”

Hospital and clinical decisions to put restrictions in place over the past few months were not made lightly, and were aligned with state, federal, and global (WHO) guidance on patient visits that are specific to COVID-19. While we cannot vouch for hospitals nationwide, the vast majority of Colorado hospitals have exceptions to these restrictions that allow for one visitor at the “beginning of life” and “end of life.” Of course, not all “end of life” circumstances are foreseeable. (We have not audited all hospitals’ policies, but all major health systems and independent hospitals allow for at least one visitor and any ADA-required supportive caregivers in these two time periods.)

With that in mind, there have still been truly tragic stories where individuals passed without loved ones at their side. While CHA and CMS do not believe policy of this nature should be rushed in the final hours of the legislation session, we believe the issues raised by HB 20-1425 are absolutely real and both organizations commit to working collaboratively with stakeholders – including the Governor’s Expert Emergency Epidemic Response Committee (GEEERC) – to develop and issue best practices to hospitals and physicians in Colorado this summer.

Thank you for your heartfelt consideration of this issue and the need for a robust and thoughtful approach in these extraordinary times.

Respectfully,

/s/
Chris Tholen
President and CEO
Colorado Hospital Association

/s/
Bryan Campbell
Chief Executive Officer
Colorado Medical Society