

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](mailto: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.<sup>1</sup>

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](mailto:mcarome@citizen.org) with your response.

Sincerely,

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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