



Leading for Better Health

June 14, 2021

TO: Members of the House Health Committee

FROM: Warren Kampf, Senior Vice President, Advocacy and External Affairs

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 618

The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) opposes Senate Bill 618.

This legislation prohibits an institution of higher education receiving public funding from requiring proof of vaccination for utilization of its services. Pennsylvania's hospitals and health systems are closely affiliated and in many cases intertwined with higher education institutions that receive public funding. Nursing and physician student clinicals, residency programs and the like all involve higher education, and therefore the bill has a direct impact on health care through its application to "higher education."

Numerous medical providers around the country, and here in Pennsylvania, have already adopted mandatory vaccination policies for their caregivers, and more will likely do so in the coming days and weeks. Many hospitals around the commonwealth already mandate the flu vaccine among their workforce.

Barring institutions of higher education from requiring proof of vaccination will therefore have a direct impact on infection control in hospitals among patients, caregivers, and the general public.

Further, the legislation bars the Secretary of Health from issuing mitigation orders in the midst of a pandemic. While HAP does not take a position on where this power resides, some governmental authority in a pandemic must exist to issue broad mitigation orders to avoid mass spread of the infection.

For these reasons, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association opposes SB 618, and respectfully requests that the members of the House Health Committee vote No on SB 618.