



MOUNT CARMEL

Opponent Testimony

House Bill 435

Ohio House Health Committee

October 6, 2021

Lorraine Lutton
President and CEO
Mount Carmel Health System

Chairman Stein, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the House Commerce & Labor Committee. On behalf of my colleagues at Mount Carmel, I want to thank you and our partners at the state level for your support during the COVID-19 pandemic as we continue to prioritize the care and safety of the patients, colleagues, clinicians and communities we serve during this challenging time.

As part of a statewide Vaccine Coalition, we echo our group's statement that while we appreciate the leadership of the Ohio House of Representatives for an attempt to create a suitable legislative solution to the ongoing deliberations concerning vaccine requirements by employers and universities, HB 435 is not an acceptable path forward. This bill will negatively impact public health in our state and hurt Ohio's overall pandemic recovery.

We know there is a lot of passion on this topic, not only in the Ohio General Assembly, but in our families, our neighborhoods and throughout our communities. However, the facts are clear. The best way to slow the spread of COVID-19 and end this pandemic is to vaccinate our communities. These vaccines are safe, effective and save lives.

By altering the ability to implement certain vaccine policies, HB 435 erodes efforts to use all of the tools available to fight this pandemic and, as the Vaccine Coalition has noted, also infringes on employers' rights. The proposed broadening of vaccine exemptions under HB 435 takes away the rights of businesses in Ohio to implement important safety measures meant to protect their employees, clients and others from COVID-19.

Mount Carmel and our parent company, Trinity Health, have led the way in getting our workforce and communities vaccinated. Trinity Health was the first national health system to announce a COVID-19 vaccine requirement for all colleagues. While some have expressed concern that vaccine requirements will push hesitant employees out of the workforce, this has not been our experience.

In fact, more than 99 percent of our colleagues in management roles nationally have complied with this requirement and are now vaccinated. While we are still implementing the requirement for the remainder of our 112,000-national workforce, 96 percent have already submitted vaccine documentation. Approximately 75 percent of our colleagues were vaccinated prior the requirement.

Much like other legislative vehicles regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, HB 435 threatens the health of all Ohioans, the economy and our way of life. I am urging you to not pass this bill out of this committee.

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