

October 7, 2021

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony to House Bill 435.

UC Health is an integrated academic health system serving the Greater Cincinnati region. In partnership with the University of Cincinnati, UC Health combines clinical expertise and compassion with research and teaching. As the region's only adult academic health system, we provide tertiary and quaternary healthcare services, specializing in the most diverse, complex and severe diagnoses and treatments. It is our privilege to treat the most complex, resource-intensive patients in our region.

As a large, private, not-for-profit healthcare provider, we are obligated to provide a safe workplace environment for our 12,000 team members and to protect our patients from harm. We are committed to a "culture of safety" at all levels of our health system focused on preventing or reducing errors and improving the overall quality of the care that we provide to our most vulnerable patients.

In order to provide a safe workplace for our team members and to protect our patients from harm, we must have the ability to enact policies and procedures that optimize our Culture of Safety, including protecting our team members from occupational exposures to infectious diseases and protecting our patients from hospital acquired infections. We strongly believe that all healthcare workers should have all of their vaccinations - including Influenza and COVID19, MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella), and Varicella (Chicken Pox), – and we allow for medical and religious exemptions.

By codifying restrictions on the type of vaccinations that can be required and including an exemption for "reasons of conscience", House Bill 435 prohibits UC Health – a private, not for profit employer – from making policy decisions that will provide a safe workplace for our team members and protects our patients from harm. We opposed HB 248 and we strongly oppose HB 435 – protection of an employer's rights to make decisions in the best interest of their employees and those we serve cannot be overstated.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. I would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have on UC Health's opposition to House Bill 435.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evaline A. Alessandrini'.

Evaline A. Alessandrini  
Executive Vice President  
Chief Medical Officer  
& Interim Chief Operating Officer