

Hello,

Thank you for allowing citizens of the state to voice their concerns regarding the current state of affairs related to the Covid 19 pandemic. Today, I am going to express to you my testimony, seen through the eyes of a mother, registered nurse, and as a nursing professor.

As a frontline healthcare provider, I have seen the effects of this government outreach first hand. The unethical treatment of patients and families for the sake of “protecting others” is absurd. Healthcare administrators are also to blame. What happened to caring for humanity and caring for our frontline staff? I took an oath to protect, serve and advocate for those most vulnerable - hospital administrators and government entities alike have challenged this oath and caused moral injury to healthcare providers. Please see my summary of personal experiences listed below (I have left out specifics to ensure patient privacy).

Time and time again I've seen families denied access to their loved ones. Those that are critically ill and/or injured or dying. I've even seen my own co-workers denied access to their loved ones during vulnerable times that could be life or death. I've seen parents, grandparents, and siblings denied access to a critically ill child all in the name of “safety.” We all know that life changes in the blink of an eye and in fact, that very moment could be the very last moment someone saw their loved ones alive. Personally, I broke the rules, disciplinary or not, I didn't care. I took an oath to protect others and advocate for their wellbeing, both physically and mentally- no matter the cost. Examples may include: sneaking family members in to visit patients, meeting family members in the ambulance bay to bring them into the hospital, telling families to go around the outside of the hospital so they can see their loved ones before the flight crew took them to another hospital for higher level care, assertively telling hospital administrators their decisions were wrong and unethical, etc. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for other healthcare providers (novice or afraid to speak up for fear of losing their jobs), which resulted in many family members being denied access to their loved ones.

Now... we fast forward a few months, restrictions are “lessening” (or are they)? Healthcare providers are now being coerced to take an emergency use “vaccine.” This “vaccine” hasn't undergone appropriate clinical trials or double blinded studies. Animal trials were ceased due to fatalities, but we'll push this on our healthcare providers and most vulnerable (our elderly, immunocompromised, and now our children). I work for two separate hospital systems and both are using coercion tactics to get healthcare providers to vaccinate. Initially, if we declined vaccination we were forced to sign a waiver with an explanation as to why we didn't receive the shot. Current tactics include: eligibility for prizes, such as extra paid time off if you receive the vaccine, discounts on insurance and/or wellness points for being “vaccinated”, labeling badges with COVID 19 labels if you were “immunized” and the latest... if you are not immunized, you must undergo PCR testing every week (which we all know was not developed to be used the way its being utilized and that the efficacy of such test is non- existent). How is this lawful? How can this be prohibited? Well... it isn't, yet healthcare systems are coercing, bullying, and forcing healthcare providers to abide by their practices or risk disciplinary action, up to and including termination. What happened to inform consent? What happened to personal choice?

What happened to protection of my own medical and religious freedom? These are questions I and fellow Ohioans deserve an answer to. I also feel as if I can't speak up about my beliefs, question the "science" regarding masking or the "vaccine" for fear of losing my employment, and potentially the career I love and have passionately served in for almost 20 years.

Another perspective I'd like to share is that from a nurse educator. I have the pleasure of teaching at several local technical and community colleges. These schools contain accredited RN programs. As a professor, I have seen detrimental effects hindering the growth, competence, and preparedness of our students. All, I feel, are a direct result of this pandemic and the poor management of education after we began to understand that things weren't quite as terrible as we were initially led to believe. Hospitals kicked schools out of clinical rotations, leading to lack of hospital experience, lack of hands on knowledge building, and time developing skills essential for bedside nursing practice. These students were forced into an online learning environment which further inhibited their performance and preparedness for the clinical setting. Despite our exhaustive efforts, we were forced to have the students participating in self learning of foundational skills and virtual simulation, which in my opinion, has hindered their ability to understand the true practice environment and leads to alarming unpreparedness for the field. The majority of these students lack clinical judgement, solid assessment skills, and critical thinking- which again, in my opinion, is related to the lack of both in person learning and clinical rotation opportunities. Moreover, upon graduation, these students were briskly swept into the clinical environment and allowed to practice as graduate nurses. While we do need healthcare providers, these new graduates were forced to take full patient assignments prior to being appropriately trained, licensed by the state, or provided mentoring by seasoned registered nurses. This leads to increased risk for patient harm and death related to knowledge deficits and medical errors. Furthermore, studies have shown that graduate nurses thrown into high acuity settings with unsafe nurse to patient ratios risk early burnout and fatigue- causing them to leave the profession within just a few short years. Our patients and novice nurses deserve better!!! (I am happy to provide supporting literature if desired).

As a mother, I have also seen a negative impact on my children. My 13 year old son, an extremely athletic and extroverted boy, was forced into online learning and self teaching, isolation from friends, and halting of sports activities. This has led to a drop in his grades, anger, lack of motivation, and lack of interest in academics. Frustration regarding restrictions has even left him questioning if he wanted to continue to participate in activities such as basketball, baseball, and band. Now, he is able to participate a little more freely in these events (thankfully), but still experiences mental abuse from teachers and athletic directors when he takes his mask down to catch his breath, take a drink, etc. Wearing masks during physical activity is absurd. Moreover, the literature shows that cloth and simple masks are ineffective at preventing the spread of COVID 19. Why are we still battling this?

My daughter, age 17, is quite the opposite of her brother. She is introverted and academically driven. She has even struggled with the online environment, lack of engagement with her peers, and lack of ability to participate in school functions and preceptorships. She will be graduating this year and wasn't able to participate in the following events: homecoming,

national honor society ceremonies, band concerts, senior recognition banquets, last year's prom, and preceptorships. This has hindered her ability to socialize with others and be appropriately recognized and praised for her hard work and dedication to her academics.

What's next? We need our local governing bodies to support our religious and medical freedoms! We deserve to make decisions for ourselves. Am I going to be out of a job because I refuse to be "vaccinated?" Is my son going to be ineligible for public school and sports because he isn't "vaccinated?" Is my daughter going to have to end her collegiate education because she won't be "vaccinated?" Are we soon going to be unable to buy groceries, attend public events, etc because of these mandates? We need to stand up for our freedoms and we need our governing bodies to do the same! Our forefathers didn't give up- in fact, many have sacrificed their lives! I will not stand for a tyrannical, godless government. **Please vote YES for HB248!**

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Respectfully,

Andrea Wetherill, MSN, RN