Re: 105 CMR 130, Hospital Licensure – Vaccination Requirements

I am a healthcare worker who lives out of state, designated as a remote employee, and I have been subject to vaccination requirements as a condition of employment with my Boston-area hospital system. I complied until March 2022, the last time they required the vaccine. I will not continue to comply. My hospital system, which has a reputation of not granting the majority of requested exemptions, will lose employees, likely myself included, if it is required to force all employees to be vaccinated for Covid-19.

Requiring the Covid vaccine means that many more people will never work in health care. I know people who would not come to work in remote positions for my organization because they do not want to be forced to be vaccinated. There are papers such as this one (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35049419/>) which also argue against mandatory vaccination:

“First, it ignores their genuine concerns, and fails to respect their moral integrity and bodily autonomy. Second, it risks causing psychological reactance, potentially worsening vaccine hesitancy. Third, Black and minority ethnic workers are less likely to have been vaccinated and therefore may be disproportionately impacted by the implications of the mandate. Fourth, a mandate could have a significant negative effect on service provision. Fifth, waning immunity and new variants mean that booster doses are increasingly likely to be regularly required, meaning that what constitutes being 'fully vaccinated' will be a constantly shifting target. Finally, vaccine mandates may have an adverse effect on health and social care recruitment.”

It is unclear that healthcare workers who were last vaccinated by mandate at our hospital in early 2022 have been putting our patients at greater risk than any healthcare worker vaccinated more recently. Without evidence of better health outcomes, this mandate is baseless and potentially harmful.

Massachusetts hospitals are desperate for healthcare workers. This paper (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37112791/>) concludes that "mandatory vaccination against Covid-19 is a highly controversial issue among healthcare workers." The implementation of further mandates in the face of healthcare worker shortages puts public health at risk at all levels of our organizations. Mass General Brigham cited labor shortage (https://www.massgeneralbrigham.org/en/about/newsroom/press-releases/2022-financial-results) as a key driver of its FY2022 operating shortfall of $432 million.

Because of my experiences with the Covid-19 vaccine and its mandated implementation, I am reticent to receive the influenza vaccine as well. If I am not granted an exemption, I will suffer Mass General Brigham to terminate my employment before I suffer it to violate my bodily autonomy.

Thank you for receiving my testimony.

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