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Minnesota
House of
Representatives

Dr. Gianrico Farrugia
CEO & President
Mayo Clinic
200 First St. SW
Rochester, MN 55905

December 8th, 2021

Dear Dr. Farrugia,

The Mayo Clinic has been a source of long-held pride and medical excellence in the state of Minnesota. Since the late 1800s, when the Mayo brothers came together in Rochester out of their compassion for their patients and their desire for high quality medical care, along with a group of caring Catholic Sisters who partnered with those brothers, Mayo has been serving our state, our nation, and the world. We have always been proud to have this world renowned, high-quality medical institution in our state.

It is with great consternation that we now write this letter out of concern for the Mayo Clinic's current employee COVID-19 vaccine mandate policy. We started hearing from a large number of highly concerned Mayo employees a number of weeks ago concerning this shift in internal policy. We also heard of the onerous and daunting electronic religious exemption application process that employees felt set them up for failure and allowed for little personalization. Concern and communication from those employees only grew as medical and religious exemptions for many were denied.

This top down, heavy-handed, all-or-none employee policy does not fit the reputation or image we know the Mayo Clinic to have. Religious exemptions seem to be difficult to obtain and inconsistent. There are examples of one spouse working at Mayo receiving the religious exemption and the other spouse did not. No one will share with employees why they were denied. This is all highly disheartening, especially considering that Mayo is an institution that was founded upon religious principles and by Franciscan Sisters with sincerely held religious beliefs.

Your amazing employees stepped up under unimaginable pandemic conditions over the last year and a half, exposing themselves and their families to a then mostly unknown virus and working long, grueling hours to take care of sick patients. Many of your employees were sickened by the virus at that time. They did all this willingly to serve Mayo Clinic patients and the people of Minnesota. They did so for all these months without the protection of any vaccine.

We want to be clear that we are not opposed to vaccinations, and neither are most of your employees. However, while there certainly have been benefits shown from these mRNA vaccines in protecting against severe illness and death, there are also legitimate concerns - including a lack of available long term safety data and documented severe side effects like myocarditis. We are simply asking that both sides be acknowledged and considered in your vaccine policy. People deserve to make this decision based on the benefits and risks for themselves and not coerced or forced into doing so by threat of losing one's job. This is especially relevant considering that many of your employees do not need this vaccine because they have naturally acquired immunity gained from recovered illness.

We understand the pressures that the Mayo Clinic and other healthcare systems have been under after the Biden Administration announced their 100 percent vaccine mandate for healthcare workers, along with the threat of loss of Medicare and Medicaid funding. However, considering the recent federal court ordered stays, the Biden Administration's suspension of enforcement, and the high likelihood that this federal mandate will be determined unconstitutional, it's time to end this all-or-none policy.

Though 100 percent employee vaccination may be ideal according to Mayo guidelines, we do not believe it is ethical, nor is it realistic. We have had a healthcare worker shortage in Minnesota for quite some time, especially in rural areas where the Mayo Clinic predominantly serves. Losing even a small number of doctors and nurses because of an excessive employee vaccine mandate puts our healthcare system at risk.

How can we as Minnesota legislators rationalize investing state money for healthcare worker shortage programs and grants if those hospitals then turn around and fire those employees, thereby exacerbating the problem? We will not support state funding for programs like these, or any other funding, for any healthcare facility that fires their employees due to unrealistic vaccine mandate policies.

In light of the recent federal changes, Mayo now has the opportunity to take the lead on this issue by reverting back to its original reasonable vaccine policy which allows for medical, religious, and consciousness opt outs for its employees. In addition, we would be proud to have the Mayo Clinic take leadership in giving equivalent consideration to both natural immunity and artificial immunity for COVID19, which a preponderance of worldwide medical evidence now supports.

We encourage and implore you to take these actions before even more healthcare employees are lost.

Sincerely,



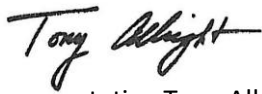
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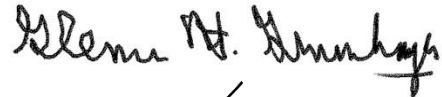
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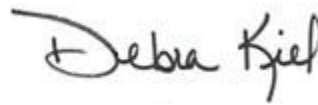
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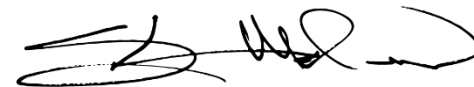
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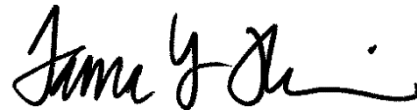
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