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Governor Mike DeWine  
Riffe Center, 30th Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine,

On behalf of University Hospitals (“UH”), I write to you today regarding Senate Bill 22 (“SB 22”), which is legislation that would interfere with the process by which the governor and the state health department issues statewide orders regarding the pandemic. UH is a Cleveland-based super-regional health system that serves more than 1.2 million patients in 16 Northeast Ohio counties. The hub of our 20-hospital system is University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center, a 1,032-bed academic medical center of which Rainbow Babies & Children’s Hospital is also a significant part. UH strives to strengthen the health care needs of our community by providing outstanding service using innovative techniques with the highest quality physicians and nurses.

COVID-19 has proven to be an unprecedented global pandemic with multi-faceted problems and life-threatening risks gravely impacting the public health of our community in Northeast Ohio. As a leading healthcare system, UH has remained committed to acting as a resource and voice to both the community and the government during this pandemic. SB 22 proposes a new system of decision-making, and we are concerned about the mechanism for which those making life-saving decisions will rely upon medical experts, along with major hospital systems like UH, to inform their decisions.

We are grateful for the waivers and flexibilities that have been enacted to respond to this pandemic through the federal public health emergency and the state-level public health emergency. These flexibilities and waivers have been critical to address infection control, enable capacity, and minimize administrative barriers in order to efficiently respond to the immediate patient and community needs. Any disruption to these flexibilities could pose serious challenges to UH and the patients we serve. Many of the changes to operational workflows cannot be turned off with the flip of a switch. This is more reason why health systems like UH are concerned that this legislation may not give them a seat at the table to explain the impact as decisions are being made.

Substantially changing the way Ohio is working to respond to the crisis as SB 22 dictates, risks causing confusion or creating new problems. We worry it may negatively impact the swiftness of actions taken to curb COVID-19’s spread and limit the loss of life. Of course, we are hopeful that you may continue to work with the Ohio General Assembly to reach a workable solution that safeguards the interests and public health of all Ohioans. Thank you for the work that you and your staff have taken to respond to the imminent threat that COVID-19 poses to our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cliff Megerian', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cliff A. Megerian, MD  
Chief Executive Officer