



MICHIGAN HEALTH & HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

Advocating for hospitals and the patients they serve.

TO: Members of the House Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee

FROM: Chris Mitchell, Senior Director, Advocacy

DATE: December 12, 2012

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 59 – Concealed Weapons in Hospitals

MHA Position: Oppose

The Michigan Health & Hospital Association strongly opposes Senate Bill 59, introduced by Senator Mike Green (R-Mayville), which would eliminate the list of specified premises (including hospitals) on which a person licensed to carry a concealed weapon may not carry, with additional training and range time. **The MHA and Michigan hospitals oppose the bill because hospitals' current status as gun-free zones helps ensure patient and staff safety and the ability to provide high-quality care. In addition, the MHA strongly believes that introducing weapons to an environment is not conducive to promoting health and wellness.**

The vast majority of groups included in the CCW exemption contend that nothing has transpired over the last 12 years which indicate a need to change the current law. There was much discussion and debate in crafting the original CCW law which protects the 2nd Amendment rights of Michigan citizens and allows for common sense exemptions in certain public places. **Hospitals were recognized as a place of healing and were rightly designated as weapon-free zones.**

Michigan hospitals will make every effort to continue to keep weapons out of their facilities. **Association requests to exempt hospitals from this legislation along with specific clarification on the rights of hospitals to continue to prohibit individuals from carrying concealed weapons in hospitals was denied by the bill sponsor and the House Committee chair.** Specifically, the state's 15 public hospitals governed by city, county, state or federal government and the three state-operated psychiatric hospitals are at even further risk as their efforts to regulate publicly owned facilities could be challenged in the judicial system. Requests to protect these specific facilities were also rejected. This, especially in the psychiatric facilities is a huge oversight of the potential problems that could arise in these delicate environments.

The MHA believes that current law represents the appropriate recognition of the potential problems of allowing weapons in hospitals. Further, passage of Senate Bill 59 could interfere with Michigan hospitals' commitment to leading our state toward becoming the national benchmark for health care quality and patient safety. This legislation is a clear overreach that ultimately places 2nd Amendment rights in conflict with the rights of property owners and could ultimately threaten the ability of hospitals to carry out their mission to provide safe, compassionate and quality care to its patients. **The MHA urges you to oppose Senate Bill 59.**

Please contact Chris Mitchell at (cmitchell@mha.org) or (517) 703-8622 at the MHA if you have further questions on this important issue.

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