

Testimony of Ryan C. Jacobsen MD to the
House Health and Human Services Committee
Proponent for HB2264, Feb. 7th, 2023

Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 2264, or the “No Patient Left Alone Act”. As an academic Emergency Medicine physician and EMS physician medical director for multiple Fire and EMS agencies in Kansas, I had an up close and personal view of the havoc wreaked on vulnerable patients and family members who were unable to be together when admitted to a healthcare institution.

There is ample evidence-based medicine, published in the peer-reviewed medical literature, that has demonstrated the negative effects on both patients and families/caregivers caused by the social isolation that occurred as a result of the covid pandemic healthcare institutional visitor restrictions.

Below are a very small number of conclusions from the peer reviewed medical literature demonstrating this negative effect on patient care, families and healthcare providers.

*“Hospitals with closed visitations saw most pronounced deficits in their performance with regard to patient ratings of medical staff responsiveness, fall rates and sepsis rates. Performance in hospitals that either remained unrestricted or partially limited their visitations was not appreciably different from pre-pandemic performance, and in some cases performance even improved marginally. **The findings of this study indicate that the policy to allow for visitors, or subjective advocates, individuals with a vested interest in the well-being of the patient, is beneficial not only for the patient, but also in sustaining high quality of care.**”* Silvera GA, Wolf JA, Stanowski A, Studer Q. The influence of COVID-19 visitation restrictions on patient experience and safety outcomes: A critical role for subjective advocates. Patient Experience Journal. 2021; 8(1):30-39. doi: 10.35680/2372-0247.1596.

“Blanket hospital visitor policies were associated with failure to address the unique needs of patients, their visitors, and health care providers in various clinical environments. Overall, a patient-centered, thoughtful, and nuanced approach to hospital visitor policies is likely to benefit all stakeholders while minimizing potential harms.” The Effect of Hospital Visitor Policies on Patients, Their Visitors, and Health Care Providers During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review. Iness, Audra N. et al. The American Journal of Medicine, Volume 135, Issue 10, 1158 - 1167.e3. April 25, 2022

“Restricted visitation policies impacted coping and daily function, and mental health outcomes of patients, families, and healthcare professionals. Participants described a need for coping and support, connection and communication, and awareness of state of well-being.” Moss, S.J., Krewulak, K.D., Stelfox, H.T. et al. Restricted visitation policies in acute care settings during the COVID-19 pandemic: a scoping review. *Crit Care* 25, 347 (2021).

“Although appreciation for the technical solutions enabling remote meetings was reported, visiting restrictions had several consequences, mainly negative, for the patient's health, the health and wellbeing of family members and the provision of care. Among physical health consequences, reduced nutrition intake, decreased activities of daily living and increased physical pain and symptoms were reported. Among mental health consequences for the patient, loneliness, depressive symptoms, agitation, aggression, reduced cognitive ability and overall dissatisfaction were observed. For family members, worry, anxiety and uncertainty occurred, and they reported an increased need for information from care providers. Family members of neonatal intensive care unit patients reported less bonding with their child and family relation disturbances due to the restrictions. For care providers, visiting restrictions added the burdens of ethical dilemmas, learning new technical means to enable social interaction and an increased demand for communication with families and providing social support to both family members and patients.” Karin Hugelius, Nahoko Harada, Miki Marutani, Consequences of visiting restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic: An integrative review,

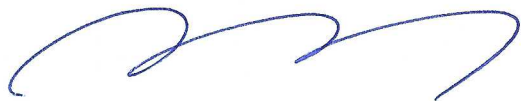
International Journal of Nursing Studies, Volume 121,2021,104000,ISSN 0020-7489,<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2021.104000>.

I strongly support House Bill 2264 and urge its passage to ensure that patients retain their ability to have family and essential caregivers by their side regardless of whether they are hospitalized or in a healthcare institution.

The presence of family and caregivers at the bedside not only improves patient outcomes and reduces errors, but also alleviates the severe emotional and mental anxieties associated with isolation and loneliness that occurs when a loved one is hospitalized.

I urge you to pass HB 2264 to ensure that No Patient Is Left Alone.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ryan C. Jacobsen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ryan C. Jacobsen MD

Olathe, KS

These views are my own, as a private citizen of Kansas, and I do not speak on behalf of any employer or agency.