



Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association

February 25, 2014

The Honorable Janice K. Brewer
Governor of Arizona
1700 West Washington Street, 9th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Gov. Brewer:

On behalf of 73 hospitals and healthcare facilities across the state, the Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) respectfully requests that you veto SB 1062.

This bill creates legal uncertainty for hospitals, challenges our ability to recruit and retain the most qualified staff members and undermines the welcoming environment that is fundamental to our primary objective: to provide the best possible care to every patient. We do not pick and choose our patients or withhold care based on an individual's race, sex, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, or other characteristics.

If Arizona's hospitals and other healthcare facilities are to offer the best possible care, they must have talented teams of nurses and physicians. As you know, our state has suffered from a physician shortage for years. SB 1062 has the potential to add to this problem as Arizona suffers bad publicity that influences practitioners to look elsewhere to provide their services. In fact, AzHHA has just been informed that an out-of-state surgical physician who had been considering relocating to Arizona has withdrawn his interest, citing SB 1062 as the reason. Our state cannot afford to lose qualified physicians due to unnecessary public policy.

As with other employers, hospitals are concerned about the potential legal ramifications of SB 1062. Specific to hospitals is the federal Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA), which requires hospitals to screen and stabilize all patients who present to hospital emergency departments with an emergency medical condition. SB 1062 may conceivably place hospitals at risk of noncompliance and federal fines if healthcare providers or employees, citing "sincerely held" religious beliefs, opt to deny services to a patient. Breaches of EMTALA may give rise to federal fines up to \$50,000 per incident.

AzHHA does not make this veto request lightly. We understand this legislation was crafted and passed by legislators with good intentions. But we cannot remain silent in the face of legislation that creates legal liabilities for hospitals, hampers their ability to attract physicians and threatens the bedrock ideal that every patient is entitled to the best possible care. We respectfully request your veto of SB1062.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Vigdor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Vigdor
President & CEO