



Ascension Saint Agnes

February 4, 2022

To: The Honorable William C. Smith, Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Support- Senate Bill 280 - Interim and Temporary Protective Orders- Electronic Filing and Video Conference Hearings

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of Ascension Saint Agnes Hospital, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 280. The Bill will allow that “a petitioner receiving medical treatment at a hospital...may file electronically a petition for an interim protective order or a temporary protective order with a commissioner or a court...while at the hospital or urgent care center.” The Bill also provides that “a hospital...may, but is not required to, allow an individual to file a petition electronically or attend a video conference for an interim protective order or a temporary protective order while the individual is at the hospital...”

Here at Ascension Saint Agnes, we fully recognize the need for a safe and protected space for our patients to heal from traumatic events such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Our Emergency Department is often the haven of last resort for persons undergoing such violence in their home.

Our clinical providers screen for IPV and refer to our care management team upon identification of a patient in need of assistance. We have trained care coordinators and social workers that assist in educating the patient on their rights and also assist with navigating their access to vital resources. Very often, however, victims are so isolated that they lack access to basic transportation just to file a complaint or attend court hearings.

We have also seen that many patients who are victims of IPV, and are ready to take action on their own behalf, are often only ready at that moment of crisis in the hospital. A seamless transition to an electronic filing of a protective order and having the hearing via video conference allows the patient to receive that extra protection before discharge from the hospital. A discharge safety plan can be better executed from a hospital where the victim is isolated from the perpetrator and receives the support from the hospital staff.

There are many victims of violence who come through our doors at the hospital. Many do not admit that they are victims of IPV. In the past 5 months we have seen 150 patients who are victims of violence, and while only 25% of those acknowledge themselves as victims of IPV, we know that it is likely that many others are victims as well. Access to immediate filings and hearings that seek to protect the patient will allow more reluctant victims to have a deeper resolve to confront their situation without delay. This Bill will support those victims and provide an immediate enhancement to their quality of life.

We look forward to your support of Senate Bill 280.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Lovern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ed Lovern, President & CEO
Ascension Saint Agnes Hospital

For more information, please contact:

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