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September 15, 2021

Lyle E. Sheldon
President/CEO, University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health
520 Upper Chesapeake Drive
Suite 405
Bel Air, MD 21014

Dear Mr. Sheldon:

During the Harford County Council Meeting on September 7, 2021, my colleagues and I received a briefing on COVID-19 from Colin Ward with University of Maryland, Upper Chesapeake Health System. In this presentation, we were updated on the system's vaccination mandate which will become effective for all employees on October 1, 2021.

While each of us have differing thoughts and opinions on a COVID-19 vaccination mandate, we collectively are concerned with the present and future healthcare in Harford County. We understand the need for healthcare professionals and staff to remain in good health but continue to grow concerned with the staffing shortages and wait times in our healthcare facilities throughout the County.

Discussions with our local volunteer emergency services personnel indicate that the wait time to transfer a patient once they reach Upper Chesapeake or Harford Memorial Hospital has been growing longer, which has put a strain on our overextended volunteer system. Leadership within the healthcare system stated that these increased wait times are in direct correlation with understaffing. How will the vaccination mandate for employees further impact these times if staffing is cut due to non-compliance?

The healthcare professionals and staff within the University of Maryland, Upper Chesapeake System and all across the country, have carried our County, State and Nation through this global pandemic. They have worked tirelessly on the front lines, often without proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and vaccinations, in order to save lives and minimize the spread of this virus.

Acting in our capacity as the Harford County Board of Health, my colleagues and I respectfully request that you consider all of the unintended consequences that this vaccination mandate will have on the future of healthcare for Harford County and provide us with a plan of action to address staffing shortages and wait times in our healthcare facilities, due to this mandate.

Sincerely,

Patrick S. Vincenti
President, Harford County Council
Chair, Harford County Board of Health

