

MEMO

February 26, 2021

TO: House General Laws Committee

FROM: Daniel Landon
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SUBJECT: House Bill 86

Among its other changes, Rep. Taylor's House Bill 86 would expand the capacity for those with concealed carry permits from Missouri or another state to bring their weapons into hospitals. The Missouri Hospital Association opposes this proposed change in state law.

Our member hospitals give no indication that bringing more guns into a hospital will do anything to enhance the safety of the people inside. Under present law, it is quite clear who can possess a gun inside the hospital walls — security personnel and law enforcement. With this change, security personnel would spend their time policing who has a legitimate concealed carry permit and who does not. This would detract from their work to deescalate volatile situations such as the unresolved domestic disputes that commonly play out in hospital settings. In most hospitals, security staff do not now carry firearms. Some hospitals have invested significant sums in metal detectors and staff to keep firearms out of the buildings.

Also, it is unclear how House Bill 86 would apply to patients who have concealed carry permits, but who may be temporarily drugged or otherwise incapacitated by their infirmities. How are hospitals to manage the task of keeping that weapon, their patients, visitors and staff safe at all times in those circumstances?

In discussing this legislation, members of the MHA Board of Trustees suggested that infusing the hospital setting with weapons would encourage practitioners to leave or not enter Missouri hospital practice. Practitioners are able to choose other practice settings or states. It is not clear who would care for Missouri hospital patients in their absence.

Some assert that this legislation would allow private hospitals to restrict concealed weapons in their facilities by adopting policies and posting signs. However, that option would not be available to the 37 Missouri hospitals and psychiatric hospitals operated by state or local governments or hospital districts. House Bill 86 would treat them differently than their private sector counterparts, with no apparent rationale for doing so.

These are some of the concerns expressed by hospitals regarding this legislation. MHA urges the committee to maintain the standards of current law regarding possession of weapons in hospitals.

dl/djb

c Rep. Taylor