

August 11, 2020

To Louisville Metro Council:

As healthcare providers in Louisville, we write in support of enacting a buffer zone outside of all healthcare facilities.

Providing high-quality, effective, and trusted medical care is not limited to the exam room; it begins with the patient and their loved one(s) accessing care in a safe and dignified manner and ends with patients and their loved ones leaving feeling informed and empowered. Under current conditions, it is simply not so, as our patients, their loved ones, and medical providers are met with harassment, threats, and shame on a daily basis.

Physicians who provide medical care at EMW have experienced this breach of personal space and safety each day. Doctors have been targeted at both EMW and at UofL with intentional harassment in the past as well. This puts ALL OF US at risk. They are met each day with at least one individual who gets within six feet of their car to protest and speak obscenities in an attempt to intervene with the medical care that is provided. Each day, patients recount the shame and vulnerability they experience as they enter and exit EMW.

The unregulated proximity of protestors to our medical staff, patients, and their companions creates significant mental, emotional and, perhaps most threatening, public safety risks which should be considered during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The threat to our patients' safety now includes the threat of transmission and infection of a virus which has proven to be deadly to even our healthiest citizens. For many of our patients, their loved ones, and medical staff, the harassment they experience as they enter and exit our facility is already traumatic. The added legitimate fear of contracting COVID-19 creates an unconscionable level of safety risk.

Why someone chooses to seek medical care – or what others may think about them or their healthcare providers – should have absolutely no bearing on their personal safety. Without regulation of allowable proximity, it cannot be so.

We, as resident physicians of the University of Louisville Obstetrics and Gynecology residency training program, urge you to consider passing and codifying a buffer zone ordinance so that we all may feel safe at any health care facility in the city.

Sincerely,

The University of Louisville Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Women's Health Resident Physicians

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