



aarc

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the world breathe

American Association
for Respiratory Care

16479 Dallas Parkway, Ste 420
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Dr. Gianrico Farrugia
President and Chief Executive Officer
Mayo Clinic

Prathibha Varkey, MBBS, MBA
President
Mayo Clinic Health System

Dear Dr. Farrugia and Colleagues:

On behalf of the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC), we are writing regarding recent reports that Mayo Clinic Health System has transitioned away from overnight, in-person respiratory therapist (RT) coverage at select facilities.

The AARC recognizes Mayo Clinic Health System's longstanding reputation for excellence in patient care, innovation, and clinical leadership. We also recognize the challenges healthcare systems face as they work to address workforce shortages, operational demands, and evolving care delivery models. It is in that spirit of mutual respect and commitment to quality care that we write to express our concerns and seek further dialogue regarding these changes.

Respiratory therapists are essential members of the healthcare team, particularly in acute care environments where rapid assessment, clinical judgment, and hands-on intervention can be critical to patient outcomes. RTs provide specialized expertise in airway management, mechanical ventilation, oxygen therapy, emergency response, and the care of patients with complex cardiopulmonary conditions. While technology and telehealth solutions can play an important role in extending expertise, they do not fully replace the value of bedside assessment and intervention when a patient's condition changes unexpectedly.

The AARC is concerned about any care model that reduces direct respiratory therapist presence at the bedside without a thorough evaluation of the potential impact on patient safety, quality of care, clinical outcomes, and interdisciplinary team functioning. We have heard from respiratory therapists and other stakeholders seeking a better understanding of how these changes will affect care delivery and patients' access to respiratory services.

We respectfully request an opportunity to engage with Mayo Clinic leadership to better understand the rationale, goals, and safeguards associated with this transition. We believe a constructive discussion could help identify opportunities to address workforce and operational challenges while preserving the critical role respiratory therapists play in delivering safe, high-quality patient care.

The AARC is currently working closely with leaders of the Minnesota Society for Respiratory Care to better understand the scope and impact of these changes. Our shared objective is not to oppose innovation or new care delivery models, but rather to ensure that decisions affecting respiratory care services are guided by evidence, patient safety considerations, and the expertise of the clinicians who provide this care every day.

We appreciate Mayo Clinic's commitment to excellence and offer our support as you evaluate these changes and their impact on patient care. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your response at President@aacrc.org

Sincerely,

American Association for Respiratory Care, Board of Directors

cc: Minnesota Society for Respiratory Care Leadership