July 30, 2020

Dr. Sonia Angell  
Director, California Department of Public Health  
Post Office Box 997377, MS 0500  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Dear Dr. Angell:

Recently, the California Department of Public Health released an All Facilities Letter updating guidance on visitor limitations. The new guidance allows for nursing students to enter into facilities to obtain necessary clinical experience and to maintain the health care workforce during this pandemic. The California Society of Health-System Pharmacists believes this same allowance should be extended to pharmacy students as well. Similar to nursing students, new pharmacists are in need of clinical experience to complete their professional training.

The AFL states that if CDC guidelines for health care workers are met, nursing students may be permitted to enter facilities. This fails to acknowledge other healthcare personnel, such as pharmacists, who fall under the CDC’s definition of health care personnel. Being denied access to clinical rotations affects a pharmacy student’s ability to meet their educational requirements, ultimately impacting their ability to graduate and join the health care workforce.

As this pandemic continues, pharmacists are playing a critical role in providing essential health care services. A vast majority of Californians live within 5 miles of a retail or independent community-based pharmacy, thus making pharmacists the most readily accessible health care providers to many residents. The ability for Californians to receive quality health care services at adequately staffed facilities by properly trained professionals is necessary to move the state forward through fighting COVID-19. As such, it is essential pharmacists be afforded these same accommodations.

The California Society of Health-System Pharmacists (CSHP) is the largest association in California and any other state for pharmacists and other pharmacy professionals, representing over 4,000 members. CSHP members practice in every sector of health-related sectors: hospitals, clinics, community/retail pharmacies, ambulatory medical offices, long-term care, public health, compounding pharmacies, academia, health maintenance organizations, and government. CSHP’s mission is to promote wellness, patient safety, and the optimal use of medication in every setting.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any further questions and/or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Loriann DeMartini PharmD, MPH, BCGP  
CEO  
Email: ldemartini@cshp.org