

Hi Julie,

Happy to submit something for the committee. They may already have what they need in the formal report from PC Task Force (of which VEN is the lead). I submitted our report on Friday and our first recommendation pertains to extending remote witnessing and explaining of Advance Directives for at least another year with consideration to make that provision a permanent element of the AD statute. This is what we recommend:

Extend Remote Witnessing and Explaining of Advance Directive Until June 2023 and Consider Making Provision Permanent: The COVID pandemic has resulted in numerous modifications to health care delivery. It has also given rise to increasing conversations about future health care needs should an individual lose capacity to make decisions for themselves. Given the community prevalence of the virus and the emergence of more contagious strains, even if there is no longer a declared state of emergency, some settings may feel the need to maintain restrictions of in-person visitation due to heightened risk of contracting/spreading disease or developing severe illness. As such, we anticipate continued need for remote witnessing and explaining of advance directives beyond the current sunset date of June 2022. The Task Force recommends extending remote witnessing and explaining for at least another year and encourages consideration by the legislature to make this option a permanent provision of Vermont's advance directive statute.

Recognize that the H.654 recommends extension until March of 2023 which we also fully support.

I'm attaching a PDF of the full report to share with the committee. If they would like additional testimony from me, in writing or in person, let me know. Happy to accommodate whatever is needed.

Best,

Cindy

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