



June 16, 2023

Colleagues,

In the past week and a half, two advocacy groups, several media outlets and various social media accounts have publicly addressed a Mayo Clinic personnel matter involving Mayo Clinic consultant, Michael Joyner, M.D. These groups have asserted that disciplinary action taken against Dr. Joyner violated principles of academic freedom.

The information shared publicly to date has been inaccurate. While the media and social media interest have been limited in volume and engagement, we expect attention to increase. Both The New York Times and CNN have requested comments from Mayo and will likely publish stories.

Mayo Clinic strives to protect and respect staff privacy, even when personnel matters play out in media or social media. To that end, Mayo typically refrains from sharing details about staff behavior or discipline. However, due to the public disclosure of personnel records by Dr. Joyner's representatives and inaccurate portrayal of this situation, we believe it is necessary to share important details. For the most recent and national inquiries, we've provided this statement, which media may use in full or in part, or not at all:

Mayo Clinic supports academic freedom, as evidenced by the hundreds of interviews Mayo physicians, including Dr. Joyner, give each year. Contrary to statements made by advocacy groups, Mayo Clinic did not discipline Dr. Joyner for statements he made about transgender athletes. Mayo disciplined Dr. Joyner for treating coworkers disrespectfully and for making unprofessional comments about the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) regulation of convalescent plasma. Dr. Joyner's comments about the NIH did not reflect the expression of a scientific or academic opinion but instead were an expression of his personal frustration with the NIH's regulation of a therapy he had championed. Dr. Joyner's disrespectful treatment of coworkers involved a pattern of repeated behaviors that, among other serious issues, formed the basis of prior disciplinary action in 2020. The 2020 disciplinary action was unrelated to any of Dr. Joyner's frequent interactions with reporters.

Both the 2020 and 2023 disciplinary actions were reviewed and supported by a committee of Dr. Joyner's physician peers, who carefully considered all relevant facts and history before reaching their decision, as is Mayo's standard process. Details of these actions are included in the unredacted personnel records that can be obtained from Dr. Joyner's representatives.

If you receive questions from colleagues or staff, it is appropriate to share these key messages to the extent you're comfortable:

- Mayo Clinic is aware of the information recently published by advocacy groups and media coverage regarding one of our consultants, Dr. Joyner.
- Mayo Clinic remains fully committed to academic freedom and expression: this commitment is evident in the abundant and unrestricted research and scholarly publications of our staff, as well as the hundreds of media interviews our physicians and scientists give on a myriad of topics each year.

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- Staff participation in traditional and social media provides a platform for Mayo Clinic to share its message of hope and healing and helps us reach patients and consumers with important and credible information.
 - Staff are encouraged to actively engage in their personal pursuits as private citizens, and we have policies that provide clear guidance for doing so.
 - When any staff member does not behave in a manner that aligns with our values and policies, the behavior is investigated, and any findings of improper conduct are addressed.

If members of the media contact you or someone on your team with questions about the situation, please direct them to the Mayo Clinic Communications Department at 507-284-5005 or newsbureau@mayo.edu.

Sincerely,

Halena Gazelka, M.D.
Chief Communications Officer

This message is being distributed to the Mayo Clinic Board of Governors, Executive Operations Teams, Mayo Clinic Administrative Team, Nursing Leadership, Mayo Clinic Health System Executive Committee, Officers & Councilors, Clinical Practice Chairs, Department and Division Chairs, Voting Administrative Staff, and the Communications Leadership Team.