Protecting Healthcare Workers from Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. Perpetrators most often include patients, visitors, and patients’ family and friends.

How often do healthcare workers experience workplace violence?

- Nurses and other healthcare workers experience more workplace violence than any other profession.
- Nurses are 5 times as likely to experience injury from workplace violence than in any other industry.
- 85% of healthcare workers report being verbally abused within the last 6 months (2021 survey).
- 95% of all nurses will experience workplace violence in their career.
- COVID-19 has increased violence against nurses and healthcare workers.

What are the consequences of workplace violence among healthcare workers?

- Results in documented post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression.
- Healthcare workers who experience violence often leave the profession as a result.
- Increases health care costs and decreases both hospital productivity and positive patient outcomes.

How can legislation prevent workplace violence among healthcare workers?

While criminal penalties are part of the solution, the best way to address workplace violence is prevention.

- Two bipartisan bills - Michigan Senate Bill 357 and House Bill 5530 – address workplace violence.
- These bills would help prevent violence against healthcare workers by requiring hospitals and public health departments to:
  - Develop plans to prevent workplace violence with input from nurses and other frontline healthcare workers.
  - Provide training and reporting procedures for employees.
  - Track and disclose incidents of violence.

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