



HEALTH CARE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

RESOLUTION #4

WHEREAS all employees deserve a workplace free from violence; and

WHEREAS the National Crime Victimization Survey defines workplace violence as non-fatal violence against employed persons age 16 or older that occurred while they were at work or on duty; and

WHEREAS the health care sector makes up just 9 percent of the overall U.S. workforce, but it experiences nearly as many violent injuries as all other industries combined; and

WHEREAS 2015 data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that incidents of serious workplace violence are four times more common in health care than in other private industries; and

WHEREAS between 2005 and 2014, the rate of health care workplace violence increased by 110 percent in private-sector hospitals; and

WHEREAS the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that while under twenty percent of all workplace injuries happen to health care workers, those same health care workers suffer fifty percent of all assaults; and

WHEREAS health care assault rates correlate with time spent in direct patient contact, making nurses, nurses' aides, and other health care assistants the most frequent victims of attack; and

WHEREAS in 2017, the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries received more claims than it had in any given year over the last decade from nurses and nursing aides for workplace assaults and violent acts; and

WHEREAS according to the *Journal of Emergency Nursing* study, only about twenty-nine percent of nurses who experienced a physical attack reported the incident; and

WHEREAS members of professional organizations and unions representing nurses and health care workers frequently describe impediments to reporting incidents of workplace violence either internally or to the police; and

WHEREAS twenty-seven of the 100 fatalities in health care and social service settings that occurred in the United States in 2013 were due to assaults or violent acts; and

WHEREAS workplace violence is a serious concern for members of the Washington State Nurses Association; and

WHEREAS there is legislation regarding leave for those who are afflicted by domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking, and domestic violence is the number one cause of workplace homicide for women.



BE IT THEREFORE,

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Nurses Association will lobby for new or strengthened laws to protect nurses from workplace violence, including felony laws and comprehensive prevention program laws; be it further

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Nurses Association will work to educate nurses and lawmakers about workplace violence prevention programs; be it further

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Nurses Association will educate nurses about the importance of reporting all workplace violence to the employer and appropriate authorities including law enforcement, regarding verbal abuse, assaults, near misses, threats, including the threat of harm due to domestic violence; be it further

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Nurses Association will partner with the Washington State Chapters of the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses and the Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare to educate and strengthen the roles of employee health nurses in the prevention of workplace violence; be it further

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Nurses Association will encourage nurses to bargain for workplace violence prevention programs including annual training.

Submitted by Economic and General Welfare Cabinet, Legislative Council, and Professional Nurse and Health Care Council, and Occupational-Environmental Health and Safety Committee, November 7, 2018

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