



Sept. 18, 2018

**VIA USPS FIRST CLASS MAIL AND EMAIL**

Reza Kaleel  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Kadlec Regional Medical Center  
888 Swift Blvd.  
Richland, WA 99352

**RE: Request for action regarding recent incidents of workplace violence**

Dear Mr. Kaleel,

I am writing to demand immediate action in the face of Kadlec's failure to provide a safe workplace for WSNA's represented nurses. In just the past few weeks, your nurses have twice been subject to patient violence and injuries which were preventable. These incidents reflect a growing trend. They have arisen because Kadlec has failed to provide adequate safety procedures, adequate security staff and adequate training. They also reflect a complete failure of management to address safety concerns.

Recent incidents include:

9/9/2018 ER – Multiple RNs with a single security guard present – a patient on a psyche hold scratched, kicked, punched, hit and slammed an RN against a wall causing multiple injuries to five staff. The existing security and training were clearly inadequate.

9/16/2018 – a registered nurse was strangled, breathing cut off by patient who stated, "I am going to kill you." When others arrived the patient claimed, "I am going to kill you all too." The RN was saved due to the fortunate intervention of a nearby CNA and other co-workers. The RN's neck was severely injured.

First, WSNA demands an increase in staffing of security personnel and their immediate training on how to handle violent medical patients. Second, WSNA demands to immediately review all safety policies, rules or procedures now in effect. Third, WSNA demands immediate production of complete copies of all documents relevant to the safety failures referenced above, including witness interviews, investigations and documents filed with any governmental agency. Fourth, WSNA demands that Kadlec produce all reports involving RN safety over the past three years including any related investigations or government filings within two weeks of the date of this request.

Safety issues cannot wait. Nurses should not be compelled to put their personal safety at risk to do their jobs. Kadlec's lackluster response to the instances above demonstrate an indifference to the security failures which put the lives of RNs at risk. Kadlec is not living up to its obligation under the Collective Bargaining Agreement nor under the law to maintain a safe workplace.

RCW 49.19.020 mandated long ago that “each health care setting shall develop and implement a plan to reasonably prevent and protect employees from violence at the setting.” Detailed requirements include an accurate assessment of risk, providing that “each health care setting shall conduct a security and safety assessment to identify existing or potential hazards for violence and determine the appropriate preventive action to be taken.” Likewise, WAC 296-800-11010 requires Kadlec to “[d]o everything reasonably necessary to protect the life and safety of your employees.” Kadlec has failed to meet this test.

Kadlec is also violating Article 14.9 of the CBA which provides for: “Safe Patient Handling. The Medical Center shall provide and maintain a Safe Patient Handling Program which identified necessary equipment, education, and facilitators.” Please advise who is in charge of this program and provide any documents relating to its activities over the past three years without delay.

While we intend to address these issues in negotiations, immediate action is needed. Please respond without delay.

Sincerely,

*Christine Watts*

Christine Watts

Senior Director of Labor

**Washington State Nurses Association**

206-575-7979, x3016

[cwatts@wsna.org](mailto:cwatts@wsna.org)

C: Kirk Harper, CNO  
Martha Galvez, RN, Local Unit Chair  
Jacob Garcia, BSN, RN, Local Unit Vice Chair, Co-Chair of Staffing Committee  
Vanessa Douglas, RN, Local Unit Secretary  
Joan Guercia, MSN, BSN, RNC, Local Unit Treasurer  
Kathy Peot, RN, Local Unit Grievance Officer  
Toni Ledridge, RN, Local Unit Grievance Officer