

SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 809

Hospital Violence Prevention Act

Bill Sponsors: Rep. Tim Reeder, MD; Rep. Charles Miller; Rep. Reece Pyrtle, Jr.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS SHOULD BE A SAFE SPACE WHERE PATIENTS ARE GUARANTEED THEY HAVE THE FULL ATTENTION AND DEDICATION OF THEIR CARE TEAM TO TREAT THEIR AILMENTS

THE PROBLEM (Results of August 2022 Survey of Emergency Physicians Nationally)

- Violence in the emergency department (ED) is on the rise and is increasing rates of health care worker burnout and harming patient care.
- Two-thirds of emergency physicians report being assaulted in the past year alone (66%), while more than one-third say they have been assaulted more than once.
- One-third of emergency physicians who were assaulted resulted in an injury (an increase of 6% since 2018).
- The most common types of assaults are verbal assaults with threats of violence, hits or slaps, spit on, kicked, and punched.
- Those seeking drugs or under the influence of drugs or alcohol are most often responsible for the assaults – 42% and 40% respectively.
- The lack of punitive consequences has become a larger factor in the rise of violence since 2018 as the most common response was to make a note in the patient's chart.
- Only 2% of hospital security pressed charges when an assault occurs.
- Nearly 9 in 10 emergency physicians agree violence in the emergency department harms patient care and more than 8 in 10 physicians say ED violence has resulted in an increase in wait times for patients.
- Violence in emergency departments is exacerbating the already high rates of health care worker burnout and impacting their mental health.
- Emergency physicians and their care teams deserve a support system that prevents these incidents and protects them when they occur.
- Physical violence, intimidation, and threats are not accepted in any other workplace and they should be allowed or tolerated in a health care setting.
- An April 2020 Bureau of Labor Statistics Fact Sheet found that healthcare workers accounted for 73 percent of all nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses due to violence in 2018. This number has steadily grown since tracking of these specific events began in 2011.
- Violence in the emergency department is exacerbated by nursing shortages, lack of behavioral health treatment options (especially for adolescents), and the boarding of patients in the emergency department.

House Bill 809 will require all Emergency Departments to have a law enforcement officer present at all times in the emergency department or on the same campus as the emergency department. Each hospital will also be required to develop a security plan with protocols to ensure training that is based on a trauma-informed approach, and create safety protocols based upon a security assessment.

