

PROTECTING OUR CAREGIVERS



Workplace violence is a major threat to healthcare workers and first responders across South Carolina. On a daily basis, caregivers ranging from paramedics to nurses work directly with people who have a history of violence or who are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. This leads to a significant increase in workplace violence in healthcare facilities and South Carolina is among the states with no laws to explicitly protect healthcare settings.

- **Worker safety is critical to delivering high-quality care in a healthcare setting.** Frontline caregivers must have a safe work environment to deliver the best outcomes to the patients and communities they serve.
- **Workplace violence is four times more common in healthcare than other industries.** In 2013, the healthcare and social services sector had 7.8 cases of serious workplace violence per 10,000 employees, while sectors like construction, manufacturing and retail had fewer than 2 cases per 10,000 employees.
- **South Carolina is one of three states that have no enhanced penalties for violence against healthcare workers.** This puts South Carolina among the least safest states in the nation for dedicated caregivers and clinicians.
- **80 percent of violent incidents are caused by interactions with patients.** Data indicates that patients are by far the largest source of violence in healthcare, but not the only source. Visitors, intruders, and even coworkers also contribute to the problem.
- **Nearly half of all workplace assaults in the United States occur in a healthcare setting.** And research indicates that incidents of healthcare violence are vastly underreported as healthcare workers often put their own health and safety before the patient and consider workplace violence “part of the job”
- **The estimated cost of community violence for U.S. hospitals and health systems was approximately \$2.7 billion in 2016.** \$1.5 billion of that is directly tied to security and medical care for injured employees. In addition to harming employees, violent incidents bring inefficiencies and challenges that add to the cost of healthcare.

Frontline caregivers deserve a safer and more supportive environment for delivering care in our state. It's time we stood up for those that care for us every day. Help us make healthcare safer in South Carolina.

SOURCES

- OSHA, Workplace Violence in Healthcare: Understanding the Challenge, December 2015
- NEJM, Workplace Violence Against Health Care Workers in the United States, April 2016
- AHA, Cost of Community Violence to Hospitals and Health Systems, July 2017