



THE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOR HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES WORKERS ACT (S. 851 / H.R. 1309)

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act requires the Department of Labor to address needed protections from workplace violence in the health care and social services sectors. The legislation directs the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue a standard requiring health care and social service employers to develop and implement a comprehensive violence prevention plan tailored to the facility and services with the intention to protect employees from violent incidents in the workplace.

Employers must:

- Identify potential risks and hazards to mitigate future incidents;
- Provide training and education to employees to potential risks, workplace control measures, and reporting;
- Investigate incidents as soon as practicable;
- Meet recordkeeping requirements; and
- Prohibit acts of discrimination or retaliation against employees for reporting incidents of violence, threats, or safety concerns.

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act protects nurses. The rate of violence against health care workers has reached epidemic proportions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics releases an annual report about injuries and illnesses resulting in time away from work in the United States. In the health care and social assistance sectors, 13 percent of days away from work were the result of violence in 2013, and this rate has increased in recent years (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014).

The American Nurses Association (ANA) urges you to support the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Services Workers Act. Safe work environments and quality care are not mutually exclusive; both must be considered in order to promote positive health outcomes for patients and communities.

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FACTS AT A

GLANCE

Workplace Violence

Workplace violence consists of physically and psychologically damaging actions that occur in the workplace or while on duty. This includes direct physical assaults (with or without weapons), written or verbal threats, physical or verbal harassment, and homicide (OSHA, 2015).

Nursing is a profession dedicated to helping others. Health care settings can be highly emotional for patients and family members, resulting in intense situations that can become dangerous. Nurses and other health care workers should have protections in place to avoid assaults and other violent acts.

According to OSHA, approximately 75 percent of nearly 25,000 workplace assaults reported annually occurred in health care and social service settings (OSHA, 2015) and workers in health care settings are four times more likely to be victimized than workers in private industry (Security Industry Association and International Association of Healthcare Security and Safety Foundation, 2017).