

## **SB 170 - Support the Safety of Emergency Nurses**

The emergency department has been described as one of the *most dangerous places to work* and up to 70% of emergency nurses experience physical abuse. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare workers consistently suffer 5 to 6 times the number of assaults than any other profession in the private business sector.

Our own 2022 survey of Oregon emergency nurses revealed:

- 75% had frequently felt unsafe at work.
- **50% had been assaulted in the past year, ranging one to more than three times, with injuries ranging from scratches, bruising, pain.**
- 52% of the time de-escalation techniques were used and 48%, there was no time or opportunity to de-escalate.
- 81% felt felony charges would help increase emergency department safety.

**Senate Bill 170** is designed to study workplace assaults in the state of Oregon and to hold accountable repeat offenders of violent assaults.

Assaults on emergency department staff continue despite hospitals performing in-depth risk assessments, implementing environmental modifications, and providing extensive training of hospital staff on violence prevention and de-escalation. Emergency department staff are **obligated by federal law** to care for people regardless of their physical or mental state, which, by default, puts them at higher risk for assault and injury. It is our belief that without significant help and resources, the trend will continue, and **nurses will continue to leave the profession in fear for their safety.**

We ask the committee to move SB 170 (with the – 1 amendments) forward with a “do pass” recommendation and we look forward to the success of this bill.

With Gratitude,

### **Oregon Emergency Nurses Association**

Bill Schueler, MSN, RN, CEN, CPPS, WVTS, FAEN – Government Affairs Chair

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