

## **SB 537 - 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.
- 42% did not feel supported by their institution and 21% did not feel supported by law enforcement.

**Senate Bill 537** is a common-sense, comprehensive bill addressing safety, prevention, and further study of the epidemic of violence affecting our emergency departments and hospitals.

### **Safety –**

- Requires signage addressing the safety of all people in a hospital.
- Requires signage addressing employees' rights.
- Requires communication of violence risk to enhance the safety of patients and caregivers.

### **Prevention –**

- Allows caregivers to have only their first name on their ID badge.
- Creates a grant program to help hospitals with violence prevention strategies.

### **Accountability –**

- Requires thorough investigations of incidents of violence.
- Requires hospitals to report assault injuries to the state of Oregon and report data to the Oregon Legislature for possible future legislation.



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, nurses will continue to get injured and ***will continue to leave the profession in fear for their safety.***

The [Oregon Center for Nursing's brief on the Nursing Vacancy Crisis](#) showed that unhealthy work environments are driving nurses away from the bedside. Unfortunately, workplace violence is a significant factor in creating an unsafe work environment. Oregon has enough nurses to fill the vacancies, but nurses are choosing not to work at the bedside

We ask the committee to move SB 537 forward with a “do pass” recommendation and we look forward to the success of this bill.

With Gratitude,

### **Oregon Emergency Nurses Association**

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