

Submitter:

Ruth Lindvall

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB537

Written Testimony in Support of SB 537 – Workplace Violence Prevention in Health Care

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ruthy Lindvall, and I am a board-certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner with over a decade of experience in healthcare—from bedside care as a CNA to leadership roles in psychiatric settings. I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 537, which takes essential action to prevent workplace violence against healthcare workers across Oregon.

Violence in healthcare settings is not hypothetical—it is a daily, growing reality for many of us. I know this firsthand. While working in an emergency psychiatric unit, I was violently assaulted while assigned to work alone. I sustained physical and psychological injuries, and developed severe PTSD as a result. The trauma from that day—and the systemic failures that allowed it to happen—still impact me deeply.

What makes this incident even more alarming is that the patient who attacked me had concealed straight razor blades on his person. Had I not been able to escape, he could have inflicted life-threatening injuries. This near-tragedy was exacerbated by my employer's failure to implement proper security search protocols, maintain safe staffing levels, and provide trauma-sensitive interventions before and after the assault. The absence of these critical measures not only endangered my life but also left me without the necessary support to heal and continue my professional duties.

SB 537 recognizes that protecting healthcare workers is not optional—it is essential. By expanding workplace violence prevention plans to include home health agencies and hospice programs, mandating staff training, requiring safety assessments, and tracking and reporting incidents, this bill addresses the gaps that have allowed violence to be ignored or underreported for too long.

No healthcare worker should ever be put in harm's way simply for doing their job. We entered this profession to care for others—not to become collateral damage in a system that often neglects our safety. I've witnessed how violence against healthcare workers has been normalized and overlooked in clinical settings, especially in mental health care. It's time for that to change.

A safe environment for healthcare workers means better care for patients, higher

staff retention, and a sustainable healthcare system for everyone. This bill is a vital step toward that future.

Please support SB 537. It is not only a policy reform—it is a call for accountability, dignity, and the right of every healthcare worker to be safe.

Sincerely,  
Ruthy Lindvall, MSN, PMHNP-BC, RN