



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 2025

CONTACT: Megan Othersen Gorman / mgorman@pasnap.com / (215) 817-5781

As Incidents of Workplace Violence Escalate in Hospitals Across the Commonwealth and Frontline Healthcare Workers Push Through Fear and Injury to Demand Protection, the Health Care Workplace Violence Prevention Act – House Bill 926 – Passes Out of the House Labor & Industry Committee and is Headed for a Vote on the House Floor

**A Healthcare Worker’s Work Environment is a Patient’s Care Environment. Both Need and Deserve to be Protected – A Universal Truth and a Nonpartisan Issue.
Yet the Committee Vote Was a Party-Line Vote**

Committee Republican Chair Seth Grove, Who Represents UPMC Memorial Hospital in York, Where a Police Officer Was Shot and Killed Responding to a Horrific Incident of Workplace Violence in the ICU Last Month, Voted NO. During the Shooting and Hostage Standoff on February 22, 2025, at Least five People, Including Two Police Officers, a Doctor, a Nurse and a Custodian Were Injured.

HARRISBURG, PA – According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare workers represented a staggering 73% of all non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses due to violence in 2018 (the last year for which there are statistics). They were five times more likely to be punched, kicked, head-butted, bitten, beaten, choked, and assaulted on the job than *all other workers combined*.

Some, like the staff at UPMC Memorial in York, who were involved in a horrific mass shooting incident that ultimately resulted in the death of a police officer and garnered national attention last month, have faced much worse, underscoring the fact that reams of anecdotal evidence (see attached compilation of workplace violence stories gathered from across our Union) indicate that workplace violence in healthcare facilities has only accelerated since the pandemic.



Yesterday, hundreds of nurses at Butler Memorial Hospital, currently bargaining for a new contract, picketed outside the hospital to call out owner Independence Health for turning a blind eye to their safety concerns. Amid a rash of serious incidents, the nurses have requested metal detectors at all entrances, increased security presence, and active enforcement of existing safety protocols. Management's response: Safety is expensive and not something in which they are willing to invest.

Healthcare workers are quite literally under attack. And with little help from hospitals – in both Union and non-Union facilities – they are seeking state-mandated protections. Today, as the Health Care Workplace Violence Prevention Act passed out of Committee, they got one step closer.

“In any other profession, if someone were assaulted at work, it would be dealt with in the most serious manner,” said longtime Temple University Hospital NICU nurse and President of PASNAP Maureen May in her testimony before the Committee in support of the bill in the last legislative session. “But for some reason, in the healthcare field, in particular nursing, where the vast majority in the profession are women, workers are expected to absorb it, walk it off. Hospital management’s response in countless cases of workplace violence is often less than adequate.”

There are currently no required standards or processes to address healthcare workplace violence in Pennsylvania. There are recommendations from OSHA for workplace violence prevention programs but they are voluntary. “Hospitals can and do choose to ignore them,” said Rep. Krueger in her statement before the Committee. “The Health Care Workplace Violence Prevention Act takes the essential recommendations from OSHA and enshrines them into state law.”

The Health Care Workplace Violence Prevention Act, which has been introduced every legislative session since 2017, would:

- Require every health facility to create a violence prevention committee with frontline worker representation.
- Mandate real, proactive plans to stop violence before it happens.
- Guarantee immediate support for workers after an incident.
- Protect staff from retaliation for speaking out.
- And give the state the power to hold hospitals accountable when they ignore the safety plans they're supposed to follow.

“While no legislation can prevent every incident of workplace violence, the measures included in the OSHA recommendations and mirrored in this bill will strengthen the prevention of workplace violence and reduce the number of incidents,” said Krueger. “It will do so in part by giving frontline healthcare providers a voice in determining what those protections will be at their facilities. We must listen to what healthcare workers on the front lines are asking us to do to keep them safe.”

“Nurses are highly trained clinical professionals – we are not punching bags,” concluded May. “One nurse, who was violently attacked, was punched in the face so severely that she sustained a brain injury and required reconstructive surgery. That nurse will likely never be able to work again. Can we all agree that’s unacceptable?”

Today, over half the Committee agreed. The bill will be scheduled to be heard on the House Floor shortly.

ATTACHED: Workplace violence statistics and stories compiled from across our Union.

PASNAP, the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, represents more than 11,000 nurses and allied professionals across Pennsylvania and was founded 25 years ago on the belief that patients do better when critical care staff have a strong voice to advocate for their patients and themselves.