Workplace Violence and the Nursing Workforce

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Report.

- Consequences of workplace violence (WPV) against a nurse can exact a heavy physical and emotional toll.
- Consequences can be acute (short-term) or chronic (long term)
- Consequences can range in intensity from minor to serious physical injury; temporary to permanent disability; psychological trauma to death.

Workplace violence can also result in financial impact:

- Loss work time or other out of pocket expenses for care or legal fees;
- Lower productivity, low morale increased requests for transfers to another unit or resignation;
- Other impact: family, witnesses, bystanders, or co-workers - suffer emotional and psychological trauma no less significant than that of the victim.

WNA Survey – (1,500 nurses)

- Experience violence within the past 12 months
  548 (38%) = yes
  952 (62%) = no
- Type of violence within the past 12 months
  o 56% = Physical (punched, bitten, kicked, stabbed, hit)
  o 94% = Verbal (name calling, swearing, threat, intimidation)
  o 14% = Sexual (assaulted, harassed with sexual language/innuendo)
- Believe that workplace violence “Is part of the job”
  o 18.5% = yes
  o 66% = no

Legislative Issue
Battery against an emergency department healthcare employee results in a Level H (Felony (7 years/$10,000)

- There are no specific statutes that cover battery to a nurse in any other work setting.
  o Hospitals
  o Long Term Care
  o Home Care
  o Clinics
  o Public Health
Other Level H Felonies
- Battery against a Department of Revenue Employee
- Battery against a Department of Safety and Professional Services
- Battery against a Department of Workforce Development Employee.
- Battery to Fire Fighters
- Battery to Commission Wardens
- Battery to Parole Agents or similar positions

States Response to Workplace Violence against Nurses
Establish or increase penalties for assault of "nurses": AL, AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IA, KS, KY, LA, MA, MI, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NJ, NM, NY, NV, NC, OH, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WV and WY.

For all other settings WNA would like this penalty extended to all nurses in all settings.

For more information contact
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