

## **Workplace Violence Against Nurses**

### **Workplace violence against nurses: a narrative review**

Smita Kafle, Swosti Paudel, Anisha Thapaliya, and Roshan Acharya. J Clin Transl Res. 2022 Oct 31; 8(5): 421–424. Published online 2022 Sep 13.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9536186/pdf/jclintranslres-2022-8-5-421.pdf>

The purpose of this narrative review is to explore the concept of WPV, its prevalence, consequences, influence on nursing, and strategies developed to prevent such incidences. WPV is not acceptable and, regardless of the culprit's physical or psychological status, should be held responsible for such a heinous crime. WPV can have a vastly negative impact on nurses.

### **JCAHO Standards 2023**

The Joint Commission's workplace violence prevention standards for hospitals and critical care hospitals include a framework for developing effective systems to prevent workplace violence.

These standards include:

#### Defining workplace violence

Workplace violence is defined as any act or threat that occurs in the workplace, including verbal, nonverbal, written, or physical aggression, bullying, sabotage, sexual harassment, or other behaviors of concern.

#### Workplace assessments

Hospitals must conduct an annual worksite analysis of their workplace violence prevention program and take action to address any safety and security risks

#### Monitoring

Hospitals must establish processes for monitoring, reporting, and investigating workplace hazards, including safety and security incidents involving patients, staff, or others.

#### Leadership oversight

Standards include leadership oversight, policies and procedures, reporting systems, data collection and analysis, post-incident strategies, training, and education.

### **OSHA**

Request for release of a Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Assistance Standard.

Included in this document.

<https://www.nursingworld.org/~495cab/globalassets/docs/ana/comment-letters/workplace-violence-standard-sign-on-4.1.24.pdf>

Release pending???

**WNA request for standards - Included in this document.**

April 1, 2024

Douglas L. Parker

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health

U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)

Sent via email to: [Parker.Douglas@dol.gov](mailto:Parker.Douglas@dol.gov)

CC: [Levinson.Andrew@dol.gov](mailto:Levinson.Andrew@dol.gov)

Assistant Secretary Parker:

The below signed organizations, representing the nursing profession from across the country, are writing today urging the prompt release of a Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Assistance Standard.

The impact of workplace violence on nurses and the nursing profession is dire. As nurses stand on the frontline of patient care and working with patient families, they are particularly at high risk to experience violence by the very nature of their job.<sup>1</sup> Workplace violence in health care remains a longstanding crisis that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A June 2022 survey of American Nurses Association (ANA) membership found 29 percent of respondents had experienced a violent incident at work in the last year.<sup>2</sup> In a November 2022 ANA survey, 53 percent of respondents reported verbal abuse had increased since the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>3</sup>

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found in 2020 that 76% of people experiencing workplace violence incidents that required time off worked in the health care and social service industries.<sup>4</sup> However, due to underreporting of workplace violence incidents and the lack of a national prevention standard to require reporting, we

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<sup>1</sup> Rozina Somani, et al., *A Systematic Review: Effectiveness of Interventions to De-escalate Workplace Violence against Nurses in Healthcare Settings*, Safety and Health at Work, May 3, 2021, available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34527388/>.

<sup>2</sup> American Nurses Foundation, *Pulse on the Nation's Nurses Survey Series: 2022 Workplace Survey*, August 2, 2022, available at: <https://www.nursingworld.org/~4a209f/globalassets/covid19/anf-2022-workforce-written-report-final.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> American Nurses Foundation, *Three-year Annual Assessment Survey: Nurses Need Increased Support from their Employer*, January 24, 2023, available at: [https://www.nursingworld.org/~48fb88/contentassets/23d4f79cea6b4f67ae24714de11783e9/anf-impact-assessment-third-year\\_v5.pdf](https://www.nursingworld.org/~48fb88/contentassets/23d4f79cea6b4f67ae24714de11783e9/anf-impact-assessment-third-year_v5.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, *Occupational Violence: Fast Facts*, last reviewed August 31, 2022, available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/violence/fastfacts.html>.

cannot know the full extent of the issue. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics data has not analyzed incidents in the health care industry alone since 2018—when they found that healthcare workers accounted for 73 percent of all nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses due to violence.<sup>5</sup>

OSHA has a leading responsibility to mitigate this violence and its consequences. A mandatory OSHA standard requiring national reporting of these incidents is a vital first step in preventing them. Without the best data and evidence, employers and health care systems cannot create effective prevention strategies. OSHA’s 2016 voluntary guidelines lead employers through an evidence-based process to create internal reporting systems, risk assessments, and tailored prevention strategies that avoid “one-size-fits-all” solutions. However, OSHA released its guidelines over eight years ago, and it is still not common practice in most health care workplaces despite the alarming increase in violence rates. We applaud OSHA for beginning the rulemaking process for this standard with the completion of the Small Business Advocacy Review in May 2023. OSHA acknowledged in its report of the Review that health care and social assistance workers now face nearly six times the risk of workplace violence than other industries.<sup>6</sup> It is imperative that OSHA continue its rulemaking process for this standard.

Many states have stepped in to fill the gap left by federal inaction and passed important mandatory workplace violence prevention legislation. The Joint Commission began requiring violence prevention interventions in 2022 for their accredited hospitals. These efforts have made some strides, but remaining gaps leave nurses in many states and in diverse care settings without protection. Nurses across the country, providing care across all settings, need a national OSHA standard followed by effective enforcement. Nurses cannot continue to wait for this vital protection. It has been a year since OSHA began its rulemaking, we urge OSHA to rapidly finish this standard and release a proposed rule for public comment without further delay.

We appreciate your timely response to this issue. If you have any questions, please contact Tim Nanof, Vice President, Policy and Government Affairs at ANA, [tim.nanof@ana.org](mailto:tim.nanof@ana.org) or (301) 628-5166.

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Workplace Violence in Healthcare, 2018*, Released April 2020, available at: <https://www.bls.gov/iif/factsheets/workplace-violence-healthcare-2018.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration, *Report of the Small Business Advocacy Review Panel on OSHA’s Potential Standard for Prevention of Workplace Violence in Healthcare and Social Assistance*, May 1, 2023, available at: <https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/OSHA-WPV-SBAR-Panel-Report.pdf>.

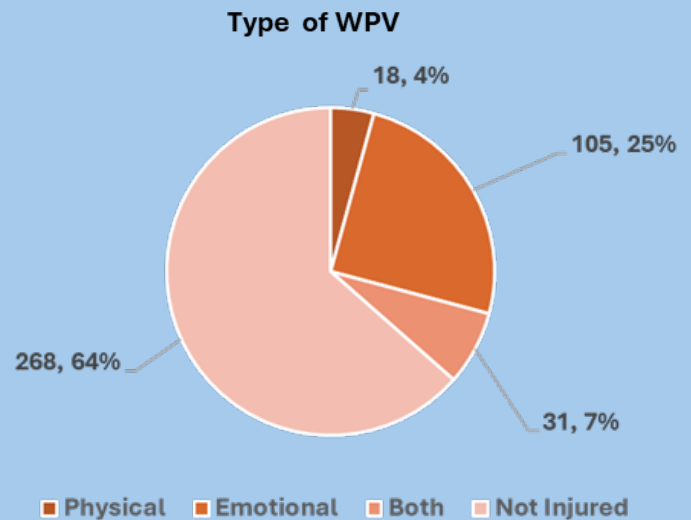
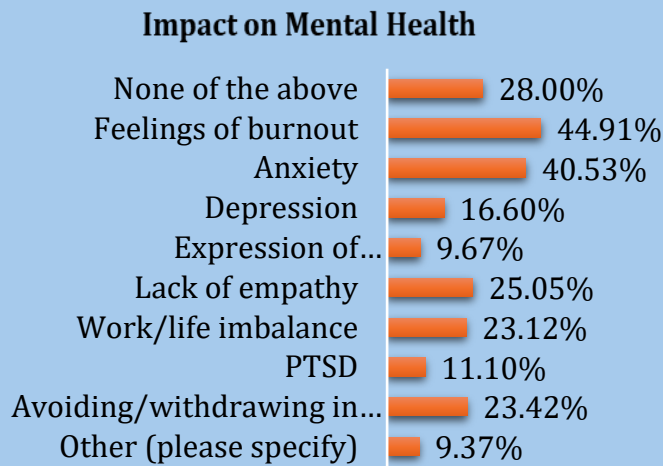
Sincerely,

American Nurses Association  
Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses  
American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American Nephrology Nurses Association  
American Psychiatric Nurses Association  
Arkansas Nurses Association  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of Pediatric Hematology Oncology Nurses  
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses  
ANA\California  
Colorado Nurses Association  
Connecticut Nurses Association  
Delaware Nurses Association  
Dermatology Nurses' Association  
Florida Nurses Association  
Georgia Nurses Association  
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association  
Hawai'i-ANA  
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association  
ANA Idaho  
ANA Illinois  
Indiana State Nurses Association  
International Association of Forensic Nurses  
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses  
Iowa Nurses Association  
Louisiana State Nurses Association  
Maryland Nurses Association  
ANA Massachusetts  
Minnesota Organization of Registered Nurses  
Missouri Nurses Association  
Montana Nurses Association  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
Nebraska Nurses Association

Nevada Nurses Association  
New Hampshire Nurses Association  
New Jersey State Nurses Association  
New Mexico Nurses Association  
ANA-New York  
North Carolina Nurses Association  
North Dakota Nurses Association  
Northeast Multistate Division  
ANA-Ohio  
Oklahoma Nurses Association  
Oregon Nurses Association  
Orthodox Jewish Nursing Association  
Pennsylvania State Nurses Association  
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association  
ANA Rhode Island  
South Carolina Nurses Association  
South Dakota Nurses Association  
Tennessee Nurses Association  
Texas Nurses Association  
Utah Nurses Association  
Virgin Islands State Nurses Association  
Virginia Nurses Association  
Washington State Nurses Association  
Wyoming Nurses Association

# Nurses Need Workplace Violence Prevention Programs

**The results of WNA’s Workplace Violence Survey from December 2023 showed 45% of nurses reported they had been verbally or physically assaulted while providing patient care.**



National accrediting bodies and federal agencies have identified standards for addressing workplace violence in healthcare settings. In December 2023, WNA conducted a survey that focused on the degree to which standards had been adopted. Responses indicate that employers can do more to improve the safety and protection of nurses against workplace violence.

## Nurses Need Greater Protection!

**Wisconsin needs legislation that requires all licensed healthcare facilities to develop and maintain a Workplace Violence Prevention Program.**

**Standard:** Every health care facility will develop and maintain a Workplace Violence Prevention Program that includes: a person responsible for the WPV Prevention Program, policies/procedures, the reporting process, analysis and response to WPV incidents, monitor and report trends, and improvement strategies.

**Standard:** All nurses receive at a minimum annual and after every incident, evidence-based education and training on preventing, recognizing, responding, and reporting of WPV incidents.

**Standard:** All licensed health care facilities are to evaluate and address the improvements needed within the physical environment that support prevention of workplace violence.

**Standard:** Report and investigate safety and security incidents that nurses report and provide within one week of the incident, an update to the nurse of the action taken.

**Standard:** The Patient Bill of Rights reflects the facility’s *zero tolerance* policy of patient verbal abuse, threats or actual harm to a nurse.