

March 22, 2015

RE: SB 132

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

St Charles Health System supports SB 132 with the -2 amendment that will make intentional harm to any healthcare provider assault in the third degree. We have had several incidents lately, especially in our Emergency Department, where staff have been assaulted.

According to our Emergency Department Medical Director, Dr. Gillian Salton, “the Emergency Nursing profession, in particular, is one of the most hazardous in the US, surpassing even prison guards and police for incidence of workplace violence. While this is partly related to our patient population, it has also been suggested that this violence persists because it is tolerated, or an expected part of our jobs.”

She also shared a recent article from the Emergency Physician’s Monthly with the facts to support this. They cite studies that indicate somewhere between 42-78% of ED workers reporting physical assault over the past 12 months, with 96% of all ED staff reporting some violent assault at some point in their careers.<sup>1</sup>

St Charles plans to work together with our local law enforcement officials to make our hospitals safer, but we need a few more tools. We are considering expanding the Crisis Intervention Training that has been very successful in our community to our front line ED staff—but that will only help in cases that have a potential to be de-escalated. For those cases of intentional harm, we need legal deterrents to change the culture that this violence is tolerated.

It’s time for Oregon to follow states like Washington and dozens of other states that provide some level of felony charges for committing assault and/or battery against hospital personnel, especially those in our EDs. **Please support SB 132 with the -2 amendments.**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.epmonthly.com/features/current-features/risky-business-working-where-violence-is-the-norm/>