



Testimony in Support of HB 2620

Ann Murdock
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My name is Ann Murdock and I am a Registered Nurse in the Portland area and an Oregon Nurses Association member. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2620, which makes knowingly assaulting a health care worker a Class C felony. I believe this is an important start to in beginning to address the violence issue that regularly confronts health care professionals in our state. Furthermore, I support the forthcoming amendment that would help to strengthen this policy and ensure a more robust strategy to stem this disheartening trend of workplace violence toward health professionals in our state.

I feel strongly that we must take an even more comprehensive approach to identifying the root of this widespread problem by also embracing strategies for implementing evidence-based practices of data collection and also increased security in at-risk hospital units. Overall awareness can be achieved through effective workplace violence training as well as hospitals recording and reporting all incidents to the Oregon Health Authority. The proposed amendment currently being discussed encompasses each of these key objectives.

I have personally encountered an instance of workplace violence when I was recently caring for a patient whom used my stethoscope as a strangulation weapon, all because he felt I was not quick enough with his pain medication. Additionally, a co-worker of mine was even verbally threatened by a family member of the patient she was caring for, stating, "If he dies, I will gut you like fish". In each of these instances, myself and the staff on the unit felt terrified when the patient's family walked from the unit door to their loved ones room. The increased feeling of fear, anxiety or shock due to violence in any form also increases nursing mistakes and reduces the capacity to deliver care. Despite the feeling of being frightened, nurses are often forced to carry on with nursing activities as if nothing transpired.

I urge the members of the House Judicial Committee to support House Bill 2620 and to strongly consider strengthening the law with meaningful inclusions of evidence-based practices of data collection, increased security levels, and expanding language to include home health workers. Every nurse needs to feel safe to practice nursing. No one knows who the next violent patient may be.

Thank you for this opportunity, I look forward to the future of House Bill 2620.

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