



January 31, 2022

House Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: Enhanced penalties for assaults on hospital workers

Salem Health Hospitals and Clinics is a local non-profit health system serving the mid-Willamette Valley. Our mission is to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve. I am writing to express support for enhanced penalties for assaults on hospital workers.

The most valuable resource we have at Salem Health are the people who work here. With courage, compassion and skill, they care for people in our community on some of their toughest days. They provide healing when possible, and comfort always.

Unfortunately, health care workers are the victims of assault at higher rates than any other profession. Their work, particularly in places like the emergency department, often puts them in harm's way. This legislative concept would add hospital workers to the list of public service professions with enhanced felony penalties, if the victim is intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly assaulted.

With the guidance of Salem Health's Workplace Violence Prevention Committee, we take an aggressive approach to stop violence before it starts, including the use of risk assessments, staff training, de-escalation protocols and robust security teams. However, we need this tool to help deter violence and offer hospital staff the protection they deserve.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl Nester Wolfe".

Cheryl Nester Wolfe
President and CEO
Salem Health