

Submitter: Renee Perry
On Behalf Of: Pam Lewis ER RN EMT Retired
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB4142

I am Pam Lewis RN, with 34 years experience in Emergency Medicine, both as an EMT-I and an ER RN.

February 13, 2017 an adult male patient hit me in the face with a closed fist, knocking my glasses off and splitting the inside of my cheek (which had to be sutured), because I did not take his IV out fast enough.

I had him arrested and charged. I would quickly discover that he would be booked and released that same night. He would 'fail to appear' in court three times, I would never receive restitution, he would never be found nor pay any fees, fines or jail time as it was, and is, a misdemeanor to assault a medical staff member; Doctor, Nurse, Anesthesiologist, Surgeon, CNA, MA, housekeeper, admitting personal, maintenance or dietary aid.

However, If he walks out of the hospital and hits the EMS worker, police officer, firefighter, first responder or Paramedic THEN he has committed a Class C felony.

I had to be careful about what I ate for 10 days because there was string in my mouth from the sutures and my cheek was swollen and sore.

I got to walk around at church, the grocery store and at work with an incredible bruise and swollen face, explaining myself over and over again, because I administered IV antibiotics to this patient who had cellulitis and he thanked me by slugging me in my face.

At last count, 33 states wisely charge this as a Class C felony, yet Oregon lags behind in protecting the real heroes like me, a 63 year old, 5'2", female who has served her entire community with Emergency medical care for 36 years now.

I asked the ONA to support me in law change and they refused, shame on them. I asked my Senator, Dallas Heard to support me in law change and he did support me, trying to pass this law reform through two different legislative years and the speaker refused to hear my testimony, shame on you!

Now, let's change this, move this misdemeanor to a felony and do the right thing and protect our heroes who serve you endlessly.

Sincerely,

Pam Lewis, EMT-I/retired, ER RN/retired, public servant/ never retired