

HB 4142 - Support of Hospital Workers after Assaults

The emergency department has been named as one of the ***most dangerous places to work*** and data shows that nurses and doctors practicing in other areas of hospitals are victims of assaults. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare workers consistently suffer 5 times the assaults than any other profession in the private business sector.

House Bill 4142 amends ORS 163.165 to add hospital workers to the list of professions that serve the public with enhanced felony penalties if they have been ***intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly*** assaulted. This list already includes emergency medical services (EMTs, paramedics), public transit vehicle operators, taxi drivers, youth correctional facility staff, flaggers, and highway workers.

Assaults on hospital workers continue despite in-depth risk assessments, environmental modifications, and extensive training of hospital staff on violence prevention and de-escalation. Hospital workers are ***obligated by federal law*** to care for people regardless of their physical or mental state, which, by default, puts them at higher risk for assault. It is our belief that without consequence for intentional, knowing, or reckless acts of violent assaults, the trend will continue, and ***nurses will continue to leave the profession in fear for their safety.***

We are not asking for special accommodations, simply the same legislative protections as other professional workers who serve the public. Please help us provide ***essential healthcare services*** in an environment where hospital workers can practice within safety layers including preventative measures and post-occurrence protections.

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