



## **Quick Facts on Workplace Violence in Health Care and Social Services**

Workplace violence can be the headline-grabbing stories like the cardiologist murdered in a hospital by the son of a deceased patient or a physician shot for refusing to prescribe opioids to the killer's wife. But, it is more regularly the assaults, hits, threats, slaps, punches, and other violence that health care and social service workers experience on a daily basis. It can come from patients and clients, but also other visitors or family members.

While workplace violence is a serious and growing problem for all workers, the rate of serious injuries in these industries increased by 69 percent in the past decade. The injury rate from workplace violence is 13.7 per 10,000 workers compared to 2.9 for all other workers.

Tens of thousands of USW members work in these industries and are directly impacted. Patients, clients, and their loved ones are also at risk.

Because workplace violence compromises quality of care, everyone is ultimately impacted.

This problem is foreseeable and preventable.

Fifteen years ago, OSHA issued voluntary guidance to employers on violence prevention, but the problem has only become worse. The guidelines are not sufficient. Some states and employers have acted, but more must be done.

The Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act was introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate (H.R. 1309/S. 851) this year.

The bill would direct OSHA to issue an enforceable standard. The required violence prevention plans would be tailored to specific workplaces and situations; contain input from workers, unions and employers; require identification and control of hazards, reporting, and investigations; and ultimately lead to improvements such as emergency response systems, safe staffing levels, and other strategies needed to keep workers, patients, clients, and their loved ones safe.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017 data.