

WellLink Supports Federal Legislation to Protect Hospital Workers

WellLink Health Alliance supports the *Save Healthcare Workers Act (HR 3178, S. 1600)*, bipartisan legislation introduced in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. The bill aims to make it a federal crime to assault hospital employees, extending protections similar to those already in place for airline and airport workers.

Hospitals across Northeast Ohio have witnessed a troubling rise in workplace violence directed at healthcare professionals. Despite proactive efforts by hospitals and health systems to prevent incidents and safeguard staff, healthcare workers remain three times more likely than workers in all other sectors to experience physical assault on the job, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Workplace violence not only endangers our dedicated staff; it also directly impacts the quality and safety of patient care. Intimidation and physical threats hinder clinicians' ability to focus on patients' needs. Providers cannot deliver compassionate, effective care when they are fearful for their safety, distracted by disruptive behavior, or recovering from prior traumatic encounters. Beyond individual harm, violent incidents can delay critical care, diminish staff productivity, and increase the risk of adverse outcomes for all patients.

Despite the widespread and growing threat of violence in healthcare settings, there is still no federal law that explicitly protects healthcare workers from assault or intimidation. By contrast, federal law already criminalizes such acts against airline and airport personnel—protections that have contributed to safer travel environments and greater accountability for offenders.

The bipartisan *Save Healthcare Workers Act*, modeled on those aviation protections, would make it a federal crime to assault hospital workers. The bill includes enhanced penalties for assaults involving dangerous weapons, resulting in bodily harm, or occurring during emergency declarations. Critically, the legislation also proposes a federal grant program administered through the Department of Justice to support hospitals in implementing violence prevention measures.

Ensuring a safe workplace is foundational to delivering high-quality care. WellLink Health Alliance supports this legislation urges Congress to take action to protect the healthcare workforce that cares for our communities every day.