

Reclaiming Worker Power Energizing Our Movement

WASHINGTON STATE LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

REDUCING HEALTHCARE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE RESOLUTION #2024.30

WHEREAS, workplace violence against healthcare workers is an ongoing problem; according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018, 73% of all nonfatal workplace violence-related injuries involved healthcare and social service workers, who were 5 times more likely to experience workplace violence than all other workers; and

WHEREAS, workplace violence is defined by Washington state law as “any physical assault or verbal threat of physical assault against an employee of a healthcare setting on the property of the healthcare setting” (RCW 49.19.010(4)); and

WHEREAS, violence is a problem in all settings in which healthcare is delivered; and

WHEREAS, workplace violence can result in significant injury and even death: home health nurse Doug Brant, a WSNA member, was murdered on a home health visit in December 2022; and

WHEREAS, many employers have been slow to respond to ongoing incidents of workplace violence, often seeking to place blame on the victims of violence; and

WHEREAS, current state law includes important provisions regarding accountability of healthcare employers (including acute care hospitals and home health agencies, among others) for workplace violence prevention planning, monitoring, reporting, and training; and

WHEREAS, these requirements, while important, have proved insufficient in and of themselves to prevent widespread workplace violence; and

WHEREAS, many employers have failed to fully comply with these requirements; and

WHEREAS, many employers have resisted worker demands for more effective prevention measures; and

WHEREAS, continued inadequate staffing is an important contributor to workplace violence; and

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REDUCING HEALTHCARE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE (cont.)
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WHEREAS, the Department of Labor & Industries has been responsive to many complaints of ongoing workplace violence, but is limited in its investigatory and enforcement powers; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) reaffirms its commitment to the right of all workers to a safe workplace and declares that no worker should be expected to face violence or the threat of violence as part of their job; and be it further

RESOLVED, that WSLC supports increased agency authority to hold employers accountable for providing effective violence prevention measures and for responding promptly to incidents of workplace violence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that WSLC support affiliates' efforts to secure contract language committing employers to institute heightened measures to prevent workplace violence, and be it finally

RESOLVED, that the WSLC affirm its continued support for safe staffing levels in healthcare settings.