



A Patient Safety
Call to Action



Healthcare Workplace Violence Events & Associated Harms

In one report, a patient who presented to the ED was stated to have verbally harassed a nurse during their shift and was accused of sexually assaulting another staff member at that same time. In another report, a patient was stated to have physically assaulted multiple staff members over a lack of adequate pain medications and pain management. And in still another report, a staff member accused multiple peers of verbal harassment. These are just a small sample of the kinds of workplace violence-related reports submitted by our clients into the Healthcare SafetyZone® system through their facilities across the country.

Workplace violence in healthcare settings has the compounding effect of endangering the wellbeing of healthcare professionals and negatively impacting the quality of care they are able to provide. Instances of violence within healthcare settings can diminish staff morale, increase stress levels, and create an environment where delivering optimal care becomes challenging, consequently jeopardizing patient safety. Addressing and ultimately preventing workplace violence in healthcare is pivotal to ensuring a safe, conducive atmosphere where both providers and patients can thrive.

While we have certainly received numerous reports of workplace violence resulting in various levels of harm through our Healthcare SafetyZone reporting platform, it is generally understood that instances of workplace violence are underreported across the healthcare industry. Just like with other safety initiatives in healthcare settings, any workplace violence prevention program will only be as successful as the organization's underlying reporting culture.

Healthcare organizations must realize that reporting incidents of workplace violence is paramount in safeguarding both healthcare professionals and patients. Timely reporting can aid in the safety and wellbeing of staff by fostering immediate support and intervention, and the thoroughness of that reporting can aid in understanding the frequency, patterns, and types of violence that are occurring. This type of robust reporting program will help empower staff to document events and foster a culture of safety, while at the same time providing support to affected individuals and allowing leadership to implement effective preventative measures.

Not only are these elements absolutely essential in learning from and ultimately preventing workplace violence in healthcare settings, they also foster a culture of zero tolerance for these types of incidents, thus creating an environment where staff feel safe and patients receive the highest level of care.

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Healthcare Workplace Violence Resources and Reports

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-23-04-hospitals.pdf>

[Online Workplace Violence Prevention Course for Nurses | NIOSH | CDC](#)

[Occupational Violence | NIOSH | CDC](#)

<https://www.osha.gov/hospitals/workplace-violence>

<https://www.aha.org/fact-sheets/2023-04-19-fact-sheet-workplace-violence-and-intimidation-and-need-federal-legislative-response>

https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/standards/r3-reports/wpvp-r3_20210618.pdf

<https://psnet.ahrq.gov/perspective/addressing-workplace-violence-and-creating-safer-workplace>