

November 7, 2023

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The Honorable Larry Bucshon  
House of Representatives  
2313 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Madeleine Dean  
House of Representative  
150 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bucshon and Dean,

The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM), representing the nation's more than 46,000 hospitalists, is writing to voice our support for the Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act (H.R. 2584/S.2768). This legislation would support hospital staff, regardless of how they are employed, by creating legal penalties for individuals who intentionally assault or intimidate any hospital workers on site. It also establishes enhanced penalties for acts involving weapons, resulting in serious bodily injury, or during public health emergency declarations.

Hospitalists are front-line physicians in America's acute care hospitals. They specialize in the general medical care of hospitalized patients and excel at managing complex patients with multiple co-morbidities. Hospitalists, like all healthcare workers, face increasing levels of violence in the workplace. Unfortunately, physical assaults and verbal abuse are all too common experiences in the hospital setting. Additionally, situations like active shooter events in the hospital are on the rise. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), healthcare workers are five times more likely to experience workplace violence than employees in all other industries.<sup>i</sup> Furthermore, the BLS reports a 63% increase in injuries resulting from violent attacks against medical professionals between 2011-2018.<sup>ii</sup>

Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 38 studies found 43 out of 100 health care workers reported some experience of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly half of healthcare workers were subjected to verbal assault, and almost 1 in 10 experienced physical violence. Hospitalists are and were the primary caregivers for patients hospitalized with COVID-19 – and individuals involved in COVID-19 care were found to be at even higher risk of violence than other healthcare workers.<sup>iii</sup>

Hospitalists and members of the healthcare team, including nurses, APPs, technicians, and other hospital staff must have a safe working environment. The SAVE Act is an important first step in addressing the issue of workplace violence in the hospital. We are pleased to support the passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Kris Rehm, MD, SFHM  
President, Society of Hospital Medicine

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<sup>i</sup> Boyle, P. (August 2022). Threats against health care workers are rising. Here's how hospitals are protecting their staffs. <https://www.aamc.org/news/threats-against-health-care-workers-are-rising-heres-how-hospitals-are-protecting-their-staffs>

<sup>ii</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (April 2020). Fact Sheet - Workplace Violence in Healthcare, 2018. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/iif/factsheets/workplace-violence-healthcare-2018.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> Zhang S, Zhao Z, Zhang H, Zhu Y, Xi Z, Xiang K. Workplace violence against healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Environ Sci Pollut Res Int*. 2023 Jun;30(30):74838-74852. doi: 10.1007/s11356-023-27317-2. Epub 2023 May 20. PMID: 37209334; PMCID: PMC10199297.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10199297/>