

AMERICA'S HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Madeleine Dean
U.S. House of Representatives
120 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

Dear Representatives Dean and Bucshon:

On behalf of our nation's hospitals and health systems, we are writing in support of your legislation, the Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act (H.R. 7961), which provides federal protections for health care workers who experience violence and intimidation in their workplace settings.

While our members have for many years had protocols in place attempting to protect their employees, the number of violent attacks against health care workers has increased steadily in recent years, with a sharp uptick during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent studies indicate that in the last two years, 44% of nurses reported being subject to physical violence and 68% reported verbal abuse. These experiences impact the individual caregiver, who may suffer from both physical and psychological trauma, and they can also disrupt care when providers fear for their personal safety, are distracted by disruptive patients or family members, or are traumatized from prior violent interactions. These types of incidents also consume hospital and health system resources that may impact care available for other patients.

The SAVE Act would provide protections similar to those in the federal statute that criminalizes the assault and intimidation of aircraft and airport workers. We believe that the hardworking staff at our hospitals and health systems deserve those same legal protections. Ensuring that offenders are appropriately punished would help provide health care workers with a safer environment in which to deliver patient care.

In addition to offering federal level protections to health care workers, we appreciate that the SAVE Act would provide grants to hospitals for programs to help reduce the incidence of violence in our care settings. These grants could be used for training hospital personnel, coordinating with state and local law enforcement and purchasing of equipment or technology that will assist in creating a safer environment.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to enact the SAVE Act.

Sincerely,

America's Essential Hospitals
American Hospital Association
Association of American Medical Colleges
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Children's Hospital Association
Federation of American Hospitals
Premier healthcare alliance
Vizient, Inc.