

Testimony of Kristen Coy, RN3
Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center
Before the Maine Legislature
In Support of the 25/55 Retirement Provision for all MSEA members at DDPC

Chair Members of the Committee, and Distinguished Colleagues:

My name is Kristen Coy, Registered Nurse III at Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center, I write to you today to emphasize the importance of passing the 25/55 Retirement Provision for all MSEA members at DDPC.

I have been a Registered Nurse for over 20 years, have worked in a variety of different settings. For the last 4.5 years I have worked here at DDPC caring for patients with severe mental illness, which I thoroughly enjoy, finding it to be an incredibly challenging but also rewarding job. As a Registered Nurse here at DDPC, one of my major responsibilities is to ensure a safe therapeutic milieu for the patients and staff on the unit. During crisis situations we rely on all staff to come and provide support, this includes the Nursing Supervisor along with Nurse Managers if able. This job can be physically and psychologically draining, days off you simply use to recover and recharge to go back and do it all over again. In the 4.5 years that I have worked here at DDPC, I have endured a significant amount of verbal aggression from patients. I have been physically assaulted multiple times, for example, I was knocked down onto the floor by a patient in rage, then dragged by my hair down the hall. I was incredibly thankful for the immediate assistance from the unit staff who prevented me from possibly sustaining lifelong injuries. I have also witnessed many co-workers who have been assaulted by patients as well.

As you can only imagine, these jobs create high burnout rates and PTSD, resulting from having to experience such traumatic events and the constant adrenaline that these situations create.

As myself and my co-workers age, the risk of being injured on the job significantly increases. I have witnessed older Nurses hesitant to provide help when a patient is out of control, your reaction time becomes slower as you age along with the risk of obtaining potentially life-threatening and/or lifelong injuries.

Passing the 25/55 Retirement Provision for all MSEA members here at DDPC could help decrease the risk of work related physical and psychological injuries to the dedicated staff

who have put in their 25+ years of time providing care and ensuring patient safety here at DDPC.

Thank you,

Kristen Coy