

MaineHealth

**Testimony of Miranda Chadbourne, RN
Program Manager for Workplace Violence Prevention
Maine Medical Center**

**in Strong Support of LD 1119 “An Act to Clarify the Criminal Statutes with Regard to
Assaults on Emergency Medical Services Persons”
April 24, 2023**

Good Morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and Members of Criminal Justice Committee,

My name is Miranda Chadbourne.

I'm a former state of Maine EMT, Board Certified Critical Care Nurse, and the Program Manager Maine Medical Center's The Workplace Violence Prevention Program. I've been working in health care for 13 years, and over the last two and a half years I have focused my attention to the prevention and response to health care violence.

I've reviewed over six thousand health care violence events, and helped over three thousand people gain access resources following the violence they experienced while working in Maine Hospitals.

I'll be reviewing recent events that this legislation would impact. Not only as a way to highlight the difficult nature of this subject, but to add clarity to why this legislation is critical to the wellness of Maine's health care workers and general population.

When a patient becomes violent, we try to rationalize it, saying that the people committing these crimes must be mentally ill, or unable to control themselves. Between the months of January 2023 and March 2023 Maine Medical Center's Emergency department had a reported 277 incidents of workplace violence.

These events ranged from vulgarity and threats to property damage and physical assault. 155 of these events were reviewed to assess if the patients or visitors who were responsible for these events had medical capacity and psychiatric clearance. 137 met those standards, leaving only 18 events committed by individuals who did not have medical capacity. Violence is usually not an outcome of mental illness. It is a result of uncontrolled and misplaced aggression.

The changes proposed in this legislation will allow violence enacted on employees and contracted hospital staff the same protections as their licensed colleagues. In March of 2023, our Security officers responded to 182 incidents of workplace violence. 150 of these events required security interventions, and 34 required security to use a physical hold to prevent the patient from hurting themselves or others. During the year 2022 over 85 percent of our Security Officers required urgent care after being assaulted by violent patients.

Health Care Violence doesn't only impact health care teams, but it scares our community preventing people from accessing the care they need. As Maine Medical Center continues to fortify our workplace violence

prevention tools we ask our Patient Advocacy Groups how these interventions have impacted them. With each improvement, we are told that they feel more safe accessing care.

Stopping health care violence is a matter public health. Health care violence is a major contributing factor towards compassion fatigue, job dissatisfaction, and resignation. With the projected health care needs Maine will experience over the next ten years, a concerted effort must be made to not only protect health care workers, but to also hold violent individuals accountable for the crimes they have committed. This bill offers more ways to protect our health care teams; so our Maine's patients can receive the best care possible.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer questions.