

January 14, 2025



Members of the Indiana General Assembly,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our strong support for SB 419, which aims to enhance criminal penalties for acts of violence and verbal intimidation against all health care workers. Indiana law currently provides an enhanced penalty for battery committed against certain licensed health care professionals and any staff member of an emergency department in a hospital. However, workplace violence occurs across the health care spectrum – not just against licensed professionals and not just in the emergency department. In fact, studies suggest that most cases of violence against health care workers take place in the outpatient setting, and ultimately impacts Indiana's health care workforce in all settings.¹

Continuing to address this trend is essential, as workplace violence puts our health care workforce at physical and emotional risk, compromises patient care, impacts health care operations, and leads to health care worker burnout.

Numerous studies confirm workplace violence disproportionately impacts the health care industry.² According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, health care workers are five (5) times as likely to suffer a workplace violence injury than workers overall.³ It is also important to note that one study estimated that the incidences of workplace violence could be up to three (3) times higher than even known due to underreporting.⁴

We believe that enhanced criminal penalties for acts of violence and verbal intimidation against professionals in all health care settings will serve as a strong deterrent to future incidents and underscore the critical importance of maintaining a safe workplace. We respectfully request your support for SB 419. By doing so, you will be sending a clear message that violence against health care workers will not be tolerated, and that our society values and stands with those who care for us in our most vulnerable moments.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



1 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10381052/>.

2 <https://psnet.ahrq.gov/perspective/addressing-workplace-violence-and-creating-safer-workplace#1>.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8816837/>.

3 <https://www.bls.gov/iif/factsheets/workplace-violence-healthcare-2018.htm>.

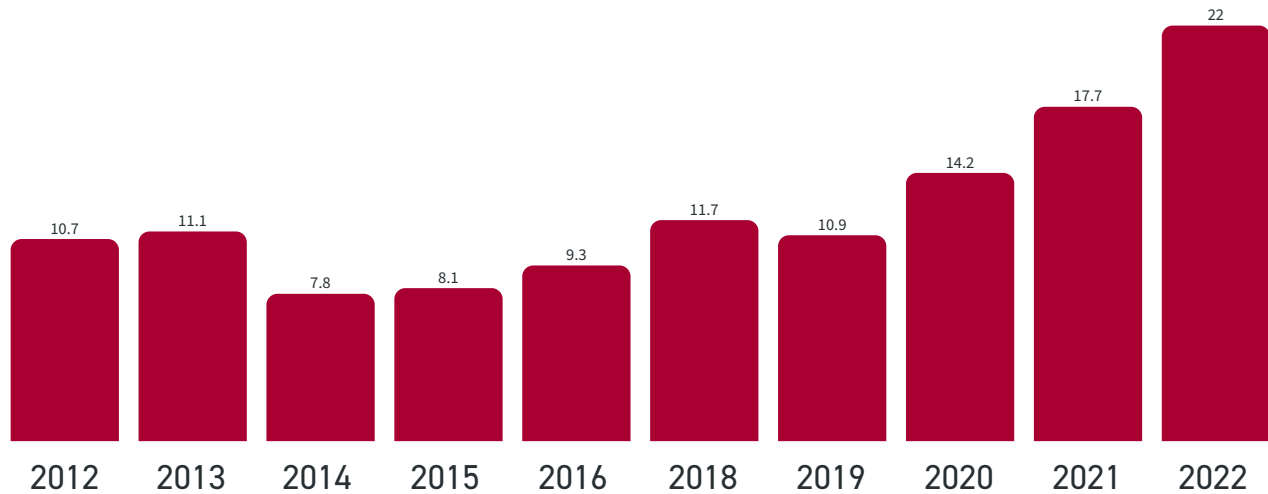
4 Rosenman KD, Kalush A, Reilly MJ, Gardiner JC, Reeves M, Luo, Z. How much work-related injury and illness is missed by the current national surveillance system? *J Occup Environ Med.* 2006;48(4):357-365.



Supporting Information

The International Association for Healthcare Safety and Security's 2023 Healthcare Crime Survey reports that incidences of simple assault per 100 hospital beds has steadily grown, particularly from 2020 through 2022, the most recent year of data available from the survey.⁵

Simple Assault (2012-2022)



Specific to Indiana, from the aggregate Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Workplace Safety Surveys administered at Indiana hospitals in 2023, representing over 14,000 Hoosier health care worker respondents:

- + **34%** of respondents said they agreed with the statement that, "on their unit, there is a problem with patients and/or visitors being **physically** aggressive towards providers or staff."
- + **44%** agreed with the statement that, "on their unit, there is a problem with patients and/or visitors being **verbally** aggressive toward providers or staff."

⁵ <https://iahssf.org/assets/2023-Healthcare-Crime-Survey.pdf>.