



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **More Violence, Just Another Day at Work**

### **Urgent need for Massachusetts Legislators to Pass Healthcare Reform Bill**

Quincy, MA – Another day at work; another shocking incident of brutality. When does the violence stop in the healthcare industry? Just this month another case of workplace violence ensued when an emergency room nurse at Harrington Hospital, Southbridge, MA was stabbed by a patient. Assault in all forms - being punched, bitten, spit upon, groped, jumped on from behind, knocked unconscious and attacked with weapons are common day occurrences for healthcare professionals.

Based upon a Massachusetts Nurses Association survey of more than 220 nurses it found that fear of violence and physical and verbal abuse are pervasive in Massachusetts healthcare facilities. More than 85 percent of nurses have been assaulted physically or verbally. Nurses are assaulted on the job more than police officers and prison guards, with more than 70 percent of hospital emergency department nurses reporting being assaulted during their career. <sup>[1]</sup>

“Violence should never be part of any job”, said ER nurse and Stop Healthcare Violence President Sheila Wilson, RN, MPH. “Sadly, for healthcare workers it’s the reality of the day. In the healthcare industry physical and verbal violence is the norm. It happens most often without any consequences for the assailant or recourse for the victim.”

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Assaults on healthcare workers has become a crisis of epidemic proportions – and one that is figuratively and literally screaming for more rigorous anti-assault laws. Ms. Wilson stresses, “The trend of unfettered violence found in the healthcare industry must stop. Healthcare workers need enforceable policies and laws to protect them from unregulated workplace violence.” Stop Healthcare Violence is lobbying for Massachusetts legislation that would increase penalties for assault on healthcare workers from a misdemeanor to a felony. Sheila Wilson has been a vocal proponent and underlying force in attempting to make legislative changes to the violence in the healthcare industry.

Currently 33 states have passed legislation enforcing stricter penalties, and some states have enacted regulations for mandatory workplace violence prevention programs. Not only is there a need for stricter penalties, but also for documented, mandated workplace violence prevention programs, including employee/employer training, safety and prevention, employee support, and enforced reporting protocol. “We need Massachusetts lawmakers to enact necessary legislation that will protect workers and allow them to safely care for their patients,” said Ms. Wilson. “It’s time Massachusetts joins this list as number 34 by implementing vital legislation to protect all healthcare workers in the state.”

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#### Citation

<sup>[1]</sup> Massachusetts Nurses Association, “Nurses, Lawmakers, Public Safety Officials to Testify at State House in Favor of Health Care Workplace Violence Bill on Tuesday, April 4”, 04/06/2017  
<https://www.massnurses.org/news-and-events/p/openItem/10443>

**About STOP HEALTHCARE VIOLENCE:** Stop Healthcare Violence was informally founded in 2008 and formally forged in 2009 by three healthcare professionals, and is now under the guidance of President and co-founder Sheila Wilson, RN, BSN, MPH. The organization’s mission is to create and maintain the safety of all healthcare providers and their families, while ensuring the integrity of the work environment. Stop Healthcare Violence assists administrators and organizations in identifying key factors that contribute to, or perpetuate, workplace violence, and also provide follow up education: reporting processes, filing criminal charges and supporting beneficial legislation. They offer speaking engagements, presentations and consultations to engage and empower healthcare providers to become change agents in their own organization. Author Sheila Wilson recently published, [\*The Shocking Reality of Violence in Healthcare, And What We Can Do About It\*](#). This is the book that can save a healthcare workers life. It covers the extent and characteristics of violence in healthcare, some of the contributing factors, and most importantly, what healthcare workers can do about it. Are you or someone you know a victim of workplace violence? Do you want to know more about the issue? Do you need help reporting? Are you seeking guidance or assistance with this issue? For more information please visit [www.stophealthcareviolence.org](http://www.stophealthcareviolence.org) or contact us at [info@stophealthcareviolence.org](mailto:info@stophealthcareviolence.org).

**About Healthcare Bills H795 and S765:** [House Bill H795](#) and [Senate Bill S765](#) seek to strengthen the penalty for assault or assault and battery on emergency medical technician, ambulance operator, ambulance attendant or health care provider - making assault on healthcare workers a felony in the State of Massachusetts. To support the passage of these bills please contact your [State legislator](#) and urge him or her to support passage of these bills so that Massachusetts can be the 34th State. Visit [www.stophealthcareviolence.org](http://www.stophealthcareviolence.org) to find your local legislator.