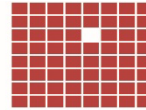




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TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier

FROM: Danna L. Kauffman
Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Christine K. Krone

DATE: March 31, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 700 – *Maryland Department of Health – Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup*

The Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi) and the Maryland Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (MDACEP) **support** Senate Bill 700. Senate Bill 700 creates a Workgroup to develop a public awareness campaign on preventing workplace violence in health care settings.

Threats of violence and acts of violence are increasing in both occurrence and severity in the health care setting. Hospitals, physician offices, pharmacies, clinics, and other sites are open to the public and should be places of refuge and service for individuals who are sick and seeking medical care. The experience of workplace violence has not only physical consequences, but personal, emotional, and professional consequences as well, for both health care workers and patients.

According to a 2018 survey by the American College of Emergency Physicians and the Emergency Nurses Association, almost half of emergency physicians report being physically assaulted at work, while about 70 percent of emergency nurses report being hit and kicked while on the job. Furthermore, the vast majority (80 percent) of emergency physicians say violence in the emergency department harms patient care. The frequency of violent attacks on nurses, physicians, and patients in our nation's emergency departments is unconscionable and unacceptable. For medical professionals, being assaulted in the emergency department must no longer be tolerated as "part of the job." Unfortunately, the stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic have only exacerbated the violence bestowed on those working in the emergency department. Not only were our physicians and nurses working tirelessly to care for individuals both with and without COVID-19 but, too often, they encountered individuals upset over COVID-19 policies, including the lack of visitation. Maryland is experiencing a critical health care worker shortage. After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, health care workers are leaving the field. The State must ensure that we have a robust health care workforce to care for our residents. We cannot have workplace violence

be yet another reason these individuals leave the workforce. Senate Bill 700 will help to educate the public that violence in health care settings is not appropriate and that we must protect our health care workers.

For these reasons, MedChi and MDACEP urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 700.

For more information call:

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