

Chapter 519

(Senate Bill 700)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Department of Health – Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup

FOR the purpose of requiring the Secretary of Health to establish the Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup to develop a public awareness campaign on preventing workplace violence in health care settings and to create a plan for implementing the campaign; and generally relating to the Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup.

Preamble

WHEREAS, According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, approximately 75% of the workplace assaults reported annually occurred in health care settings; and

WHEREAS, Workers in health care settings are four times more likely to be victims of workplace violence than workers in other settings; and

WHEREAS, Violence–related injuries are four times more likely to cause health care workers to take time off from work than other kinds of injuries; and

WHEREAS, Alarming, the actual number of violent incidents involving health care is much likely higher than reported, because episodes of workplace violence are grossly underreported; and

WHEREAS, The experience of workplace violence has not only physical consequences, but personal, emotional, and professional consequences as well; and

WHEREAS, Hospitals and health care providers are actively working to prevent workplace violence with electronic systems for reporting and tracking incidences of workplace violence, implementing zero tolerance policies, providing training on de–escalation techniques, increasing security, and disseminating personal wearable safety alarms; and

WHEREAS, While health care providers were lauded as health care heroes and celebrated at the beginning of the COVID–19 pandemic, today they are experiencing an alarming rise in violence in the workplace; and

WHEREAS, The increase in workplace violence is contributing to the burnout of health care professionals who are leaving the profession or changing practice locations; and

WHEREAS, Having an increased public awareness of the magnitude of and consequences associated with workplace violence in health care settings would help combat this phenomenon; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

(a) (1) The Secretary of Health shall establish a Prevent Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings Public Awareness Campaign Workgroup.

(2) The Workgroup shall include the following members, appointed by the Secretary:

(i) at least one licensed health care provider, including a provider who has experienced workplace violence;

(ii) at least one individual who works in a hospital;

(iii) at least one individual who works in a nursing home;

(iv) at least one public communications professional;

(v) at least one individual who works in a facility that provides mental health services;

(vi) at least one individual who works in a facility that provides treatment for substance abuse disorders;

(vii) ~~at least one individual who works in a facility that provides health care services to individuals with disabilities~~ one representative from the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association;

(viii) at least one representative who works to provide security services at a health care facility; and

(ix) any other representative that the Secretary determines necessary.

(b) The Workgroup shall:

(1) develop a public awareness campaign on preventing workplace violence in health care settings to:

(i) provide the public with information on:

1. the magnitude of incidences of workplace violence in health care settings in the State; and

2. the consequences of workplace violence in health care settings in the State; and

(ii) urge the public to respect the State's health care providers and protect the State's health care providers from workplace violence;

(2) recognize and accommodate the needs of patients with mental health disorders, and substance abuse disorders, ~~and disabilities~~ in the development of the campaign; and

(3) create a plan for implementing the public awareness campaign, including distributing information on workplace violence in a health care setting in the State.

(c) On or before November 1, 2022, the Workgroup shall report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Health and Government Operations Committee, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on the public awareness campaign developed under subsection (b) of this section.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2022.

Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 29, 2022.