



MedStar Health

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**HB 1146 – Crime of Violence - Medical Facilities and Places of Worship – Penalty  
(Sacred Places Safety Act)**

Position: **Support**  
House Judiciary Committee  
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MedStar Health is the largest healthcare provider in the Maryland and Washington, D.C. region. MedStar Health offers a comprehensive spectrum of clinical services through over 500 care locations, including 10 hospitals, 33 urgent care clinics, ambulatory care centers, and an extensive array of primary and specialty care providers. As a not-for-profit healthcare system, MedStar Health is committed to its patient-first philosophy, emphasizing care, compassion, and clinical excellence, supported by a dedicated team of more than 35,000 physicians, nurses, and many other clinical and non-clinical associates.

HB 1146 would strengthen accountability by making it a felony to commit a crime of violence in a healthcare facility or place of worship, punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Thirty-six other jurisdictions have enacted similarly strong protections for healthcare workers. Maryland passed a Workplace Violence Act in 2021, allowing employers to obtain court-ordered Peace Orders to protect employees facing threats or assault. However, assaults on nurses and physicians remain prevalent, and additional protections are needed.

Violence, including workplace and community violence, abuse, and threatening behavior, remains a serious and growing public health issue affecting the U.S. healthcare system. Incidents of assault, homicide, and firearm violence have risen over the past decade and worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare workers face a particularly acute risk: they are 4–5 times more likely to experience workplace violence than workers in other professions. Yet incidents are significantly underreported, and as a result, workplace violence continues to endanger staff and disrupt patient care nationwide.

In the first six months of FY26, Medstar Health had 923 reported acts of workplace violence. Of these 923 events, 314 have been physical assaults. Physical assaults have increased by 53% from FY23 to FY25. If the current trajectory continues, we can expect to see an increase in physical assaults for the third year in a row.

A recent example of workplace violence occurred in the emergency department. A nurse was violently assaulted by a patient. She was grabbed by her hair and thrown around the room. During the attack, she remembered everything going black and feared she was going to die. After the attack, she reported that she did not know how she could return to the emergency department to care for patients again. She is continuing to experience headaches and is now missing a section of her hair related to this assault.

Despite systemwide initiatives and efforts to curb violence, it continues to escalate, and hospitals are forced to absorb significant costs. The American Hospital Association estimates that hospital violence costs exceed \$18 billion annually in lost productivity, staff turnover, medical treatment, and property damage. These costs compound workforce shortages, strain hospital operations, and divert resources from patient care and community investment. Over the past four years, MedStar Health associates have accounted for over 7,000 lost workdays. In the first quarter of FY26 alone, there were over 400 lost workdays for associates. Looking at the number of reported injuries, we have seen an increase each year for the past four years

For these reasons, MedStar Health respectfully urges a **favorable** report on **HB 1146**.

**It's how we treat people.**