



Maryland
Hospital Association

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

Position: *Support*

March 5, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

MHA Position

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of House Bill 1146.

Hospitals are places of health and healing, yet too often they become sites of violence. This takes an immense toll on caregivers, including physical injury, emotional pain and suffering, diminished job satisfaction, and lasting psychological impacts on those who experience or witness violence.

While these harms cannot be measured or quantified, violence in U.S. hospitals is estimated to have a financial cost of \$18.27 billion in one year.¹

Hospitals are not battlefields. No hospital employee should risk their own safety in the service of others. Maryland hospitals have implemented significant measures and training to protect employees, patients, and visitors. These include redesigning patient care areas to improve visibility and safety, implementing de-escalation training, post-incident counseling support for employees, court accompaniment for affected staff, and systematic data collection on incidents.

MHA collaborated with the Maryland Patient Safety Center and the Maryland Health Care Commission on [Care Flows Both Ways](#), a state-funded workplace violence prevention campaign. The campaign engaged Maryland hospital employees to personalize the message that violence should not be part of their job and should not be tolerated.

Despite these efforts, the statistics are staggering. MHA surveyed 32 hospitals in 2024 regarding the number of incidents of violence occurring between July 2023 and December 2023. Hospitals reported 1,811 incidents. Out of this total, only 6% were recordable based on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) definition. To be an [OSHA recordable event](#), the illness or injury must require medical treatment beyond first aid, result in loss of consciousness, require one or more days away from work following the date of the incident, require restricted work or transfer to another job, result in any significant injury or illness diagnosed by a physician or other licensed health care professional or result in a fatality. The majority of the violence that occurs every day in Maryland hospitals does not always rise to the definition of a

¹ [The-Burden-of-Violence-to-US-Hospitals.pdf](#)

crime of violence. However, this does not mean our health care workers are not facing serious injuries and threats.

MHA believes that every patient, visitor, and hospital employee should feel safe and secure when in medical facilities. HB 1146 sends a clear and necessary message: acts of violence in medical facilities and places of worship will not be tolerated. This bill aligns with Maryland's commitment to environments where healing and recovery can occur free from the threat of violence. No nurse, physician, or hospital staff member should ever have to choose between their safety and their duty to care for others.

We thank Delegate Alston for bringing this bill forward and ask the Committee to stand with Maryland hospitals and health care providers to ensure a safe and secure environment for all.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report on HB 1146.

For more information, please contact:

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