



Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47 Local 5047

AFT-CT, AFT Healthcare, AFL- CIO

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Written Testimony of

Paula Amero, RN

Danbury Nurses' Union Unit #47, AFT Local 5047, AFL-CIO

**To Representative Betsy Ritter, Senator Andrea Stillman
and Members of the Public Health Committee**

**Re: S.B. No 970 AN ACT CONCERNING WORK PLACE VIOLENCE
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE IN HEALTH CARE SETTINGS.**

February 23, 2011

My passion for health care began at the age of seventeen. During my journey I have been spit at, pushed, slapped, hit, kicked, beaten, choked and even had my jaw broken! Today, I can add being shot at by a patient. I am 53, my name is Paula Amero, and I work at Danbury Hospital as an R.N.

I bring this experience to you today to show the need to support Senate Bill 970. We must have a uniform policy for developing workplace violence programs in our health care institutions, not only for the worker, but also for you and your family.

The day of this shooting was about seven months ago. I work on a cardiac unit. My patient, or "shooter" as most like to call him, was beginning to act more paranoid, hallucinating that the I.V. pole was going to hurt him. As his agitation grew, I saw the fear on the nurse's aide's face, herself being just a nursing student. As I attempted to get an M.D. to assess the patient and possibly medicate him, my assistant nurse manager went to assist in getting the patient under control.

I heard two shots. Everyone stood in shock and disbelief of what they heard. On instinct, I ran down the hall towards my patient's room which was three rooms away from the Nurses' Station. What I saw was my patient lying on the floor and my clinical leader on top of him. My patient's arm was pointing toward the ceiling, holding a small caliber semi-automatic hand gun. There was blood on the floor and the wall.

My patient kept yelling that he was going to shoot everyone. I ran to grab his arm and the gun, but fell short. I watched my boss get shot two more times as I ducked behind a laundry cart. That was all that was between me and a gun. He shot the gun several more times randomly towards the Nurses' Station.

There was a lot of screaming. So much happened in a very short period of time. Hospital security was all around that I could see. One took the shooter (who was still lying on the floor) from behind and got the gun from his hand. By then Swat Team was there with many more guns.

No matter how I felt, my passion stepped in and I got down on the floor next to my patient and took care of him. He also got shot that day.

There were many "HERO'S" that day and several that had the gun pointed right at their abdomen and forehead. Yet, we continue to have to fight for assistance from hospital management. We need policy changes, security changes and a heightened awareness with not only aggressive patients, but also with visitors.

I love my job, but I love my eleven year old child more. I need to go into work feeling safe and she needs to go to school knowing mommy will not get shot at again. No one loses with this bill. Not even the person who commits the violent act. I urge you to support SB 970.

Thank you for your time.