



- TESTIMONY OF -
DAVID A. WHITEHEAD, President and CEO
and
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THE WILLIAM W. BACKUS HOSPITAL
SUBMITTED TO PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 7, 2012

SB 275, An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Prevention And Reporting

The William W. Backus Hospital appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony concerning SB 275, "An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Prevention And Reporting."

Backus is a community hospital with more than 1,700 full- and part-time employees. Protecting our patients, our staff and our guests is an essential function of our organization. Backus is pleased to lend its support to this bill, along with the Connecticut Hospital Association, as SB 275 demonstrates that workplace safety must maintain a key priority.

Backus Hospital has an extensive workplace violence policy that would be enhanced with the passage of SB 275. Policies at Backus:

- Teach staff how to recognize and report the early warning signs that could lead to violent confrontations, as well as skills to defuse tense situations.
- Ensure that staff understands security protocols, and participates in emergency training and security procedures.
- Minimize environmental risks to remove hazards from the workplace.
- Revised visitor policies that take into consideration the number of visitors allowed in a non-high risk vs. high risk situation.
- The availability of medical and psychological counseling and debriefing for employees who might experience or witness violent incidents.

Backus has a Public Safety staff of 40 employees. We conduct training on the Management of Aggressive Behaviors (MOAB) and extensive education on creating and maintaining a safe work environment for our patients, staff and visitors at all Backus locations — on and off our main hospital campus.

Backus, along with the Connecticut Hospital Association, wants the goals of Public Act 11-175 to be fully realized. We are pleased that SB 275 establishes a clear threshold for notifying police when an incident occurs, based on the harm that is suffered by a workforce member.

Pursuant to SB 275, all of the following will require a mandatory call to the police: death, loss of consciousness, choking of a person such that air or blood is cut off, or any injury that requires medical attention (beyond first aid), as well as any verbal threat of inflicting any of those injuries or harms when a healthcare employer reasonably believes the threat is real, immediate, and that the aggressor is capable of carrying it out.

We urge you to implement these necessary changes to Public Act 11-175.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Respectfully submitted,



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