

**TESTIMONY OF
*Danbury Hospital and New Milford Hospital
As the Western CT Health Network (WCHN)***

SB 275, An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Prevention And Reporting

Western Connecticut Health Network appreciates this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning SB 275, An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Prevention And Reporting. **WCHN supports this bill but asks for some clarifications to ensure its full intent is realized.**

Nothing is more important to Western Connecticut Health Network than the safety and security of patients, visitors, practitioners and our employees. Protecting them and promoting a culture of safety is critical.

Last year, we helped shape SB 970 in tandem with other hospitals and entities, which passed as Public Act 11-175. The bill, which was crafted with input from multiple sources, was designed to anticipate various contingencies and circumstances regarding how the law would apply to real situations. While last year's bill was a great first step, when implemented, the provisions describing when to call police caused confusion. This confusion could result in inconsistent application of the bill's intent.

Recognizing the growing importance of this issue over the past several years, we also worked to improve safety at our own facilities. These improvements include implementing regular meetings of our safety committee, which is comprised of representation of administrative, clinical and other hospital departments to ensure safety concerns and measures are discussed and acted upon.

Additionally, we have a robust Security Action Plan in place and active that includes:

- Regular safety meetings and ongoing safety assessments
- A comprehensive security plan endorsed by a national consultant and involving area chiefs of police
- A workplace violence prevention and training program
- Situation training exercises
- Improved notification system
- Enhanced security presence and alarm devices
- Improved monitoring and access system
- Redesigned visitor guidelines with enhanced visitor screening and identification system

Now that we have more experience in dealing with the issue, we are in a better position to clarify the details in a way that will both enhance the law and protect persons at risk of being inadvertently swept up into law enforcement proceedings.

We want the goals of Public Act 11-175 to be fully realized as intended. In order to achieve those goals, we are strongly suggesting that SB 275 be clear as to when law enforcement must be called. Specifically, 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.

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Executive Director and Senior Vice President, New Milford Hospital