

**TESTIMONY OF  
Yale-New Haven Hospital  
SUBMITTED TO THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
Wednesday, March 7, 2012**

**SB 275, An Act Concerning Workplace Violence Prevention And Reporting**

On behalf of Yale-New Haven Hospital (YNHH), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 275, An Act Concerning Workplace Violence and Reporting**.

YNHH, including Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, Yale-New Haven Psychiatric Hospital and Smilow Cancer Hospital, strives to provide sensitive, high-quality health care to all our patients, and serves as a primary care center for thousands of New Haven-area residents and a referral center for patients from around the state and country. With nearly 9000 employees, Yale-New Haven is the second largest employer in New Haven and continues to be the State's largest hospital provider of services to people covered by Medicaid. Reaching into the community, we enhance student learning through a number of hands-on partnerships in our schools; provide support to local non-profits; build homes with our employees through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity; and remain a sponsor of the nursing program at Gateway Community College.

Yale-New Haven Hospital supports SB 275 because we strongly believe in the obligation that all healthcare institutions share in protecting their patients, visitors, and workers and must remain vigilant, prepared, and committed to making their respective environments safe and secure at all times. This is a high priority. When we create a safe working environment, we also ensure that they perform at the highest level when administering patient care. Patients, visitors, and our employees can remain confident that Yale-New Haven Hospital has taken an administratively aggressive approach in selecting the highest level of security components to protect our campus and environment. This includes a "Health Stream" computer-based employee educational model that is designed to teach our employees how to detect and safely respond to actual or potential "Workplace Aggression" situations. Under the operational responsibilities of the Department of Protective Services, a state-of-the-art electronic surveillance system is comprised of over approximately 1,000 cameras and approximately 900 duress alarms throughout the main campus and various off-site properties. Annual and special Security Risk Assessments are performed to identify and mitigate any security risks. In addition to the computer-based training format, special educational programs are designed to address departments and groups of employees who may be at a higher risk because of their job responsibilities. The Hospital's Human Resources Employee Relations Department oversees the Hospital's "Workplace Non-Aggression" policy and works with Protective Services in identifying potential issues and responding to them accordingly. This includes policy and procedure reviews and future needs assessments. The Hospital has a "Zero Tolerance" stance for workplace aggression and all incidents are immediately responded to, up and to requesting assistance from external law enforcement agencies. Approximately 10,000 security deterrent patrols are conducted each month by our security officers. The Department of Protective Services is composed of over 100 proprietary licensed security officers, many of whom have extensive law enforcement backgrounds prior to joining our Department. Protective Services holds a state Proprietary Security Service License that permits the Hospital to operate its own security service on all property controlled by Yale-New Haven Hospital. Security checkpoints are strategically positioned at all main entrances and other select locations to enforce our Access Control policies. In addition to all of the above proactive measures to deter and prevent incidents, the Hospital continuously researches and tests new technologies and programs to ensure the safety and security of all patients, families and visitors, and employees at Yale-New Haven Hospital, and to meet our Department's obligations to the Hospital Mission Statement.

We agree that Public Act 11-175, was a significant step forward in furthering the commitment of healthcare facilities to reduce and prevent violence in the workplace. The bill was crafted to anticipate certain contingencies and its application to actual situations. However, some provisions of the new law may result in uneven application, and we agree with the Connecticut Hospital Association that we need to clarify the details of the legislation in a way that will both enhance the law and prevent unintended law enforcement proceedings.

We want the goals of Public Act 11-175 to be fully realized, and SB 275 will clarify 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. SB 275 will require a mandatory call to the police when the following occurs: 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 and support SB 275.

Thank you for considering the position of Yale-New Haven Hospital.