

**To:** Members of the House Law & Justice Committee  
**From:** Chris Mitchell, Senior Vice President, Advocacy  
Paige Fults, Director, Advocacy  
**Date:** Oct. 2, 2018  
**Re:** House Bills 6203 & 6204 – Violence Against Healthcare Workers and Medical Volunteers

**Position:** Support

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The Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) supports House Bills (HBs) 6203 and 6204, introduced by Rep. Hank Vaupel (R-Handy Twp.). These bills would amend the Michigan Penal Code to provide additional protections for health professionals and medical volunteers while they are delivering patient care.

Violence against healthcare workers reflects a disturbing trend. The FBI and Occupational Safety and Health Administration report that more assaults occur in the healthcare field than any other. According to 2014 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data cited by OSHA, workers in the healthcare and social assistance sector experienced violence-related injuries in the workplace at a rate more than four times higher than the rate for workers in the private sector overall. This exceeds other large hands-on professions, such as construction, manufacturing and retail.

Healthcare accounts for nearly as many serious violent injuries as all other industries combined. In one survey by the American Nurses Association, also cited by OSHA, 21 percent of registered nurses and nursing students reported being physically assaulted in a 12-month period. According to the American College of Emergency Physicians, more than 75 percent of emergency physicians experienced at least one violent workplace incident in the past year. Eighty percent of these assaults are interactions with patients.

Beyond the human toll, workplace violence is financially costly. Hospitals spent an estimated \$1.1 billion in security and training costs to prevent violence within their facilities, plus \$429 million in medical care, staffing, indemnity, and other costs resulting from violence against hospital workers, according to a 2017 report commissioned by the American Hospital Association.

A safe environment for both patients and healthcare professionals is vital for Michigan hospitals to continue delivering the highest quality of care. Please contact Paige Fults (pfults@mha.org) at (517) 703-8616 at the MHA if you have further questions regarding HBs 6203 and 6204.

*Brian Peters, Chief Executive Officer*