



May 20, 2022

The Honorable Joe Courtney
United States House of Representatives
2449 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Courtney,

On behalf of the American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM) and our 9,000 members, thank you for sponsoring H.R. 1195, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Services Workers Act. AAEM is the national organization representing board certified emergency physicians. We are grateful for your leadership to ensure that physicians, and all members of the health care team, are protected while engaging in life-saving work.

Violence in healthcare is an ever-present and growing concern. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), health care workers experience rates of workplace violence that are four times higher than employees in other industries. In fact, the number of workplace violence incidents in the health care industry exceeds almost every other industry combined.

Those of us who work in emergency departments (EDs) know the toll too well. A recent survey of emergency medicine physicians found that nearly half had been physically assaulted at some point in their career. Aside from the physical impacts, these alarming rates of violence contribute to undo stress and burnout in our profession. We find the status quo simply unacceptable; something has to change.

We believe that H.R. 1195 will help stem the tide of violence in health care. Every ED, and every hospital, faces unique challenges in designing and maintaining a safe work environment. It is proper, then, that employers and hospitals be allowed to develop mitigation and response plans that fit with the unique needs of their staff, facilities, and patient populations.

Yet, every prevention plan should be based on evidence. Instructing OSHA to develop best practices for workplace violence prevention is an important step to ensuring that hospitals have a proven framework to form the basis of these plans. The treatments we choose when treating our patients in the ED is based on rigorous scientific evidence. The same should be true for efforts to keep us safe at work.

Once again Representative Courtney, thank you for your leadership on this incredibly important issue. AAEM looks forward to the opportunity to work with you to ensure that our members, and the patients they treat every day, are protected from violence in their workplace. You can contact me at jsjonesmd@gmail.com and I welcome the opportunity to hear from you or your staff if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jonathan S. Jones, MD, FAAEM
President
American Academy of Emergency Medicine

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