



Protect Physicians and Healthcare Workers by Supporting the SAVE Act

BACKGROUND

Violence against healthcare workers has long been an occupational hazard and has grown more severe since the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, two-thirds of emergency physicians reported being assaulted at work in the prior year, with more than one-third reporting having been assaulted more than once.³

Although emergency physicians bear the brunt of workplace violence incidents, 40% of all healthcare workers report experiencing an incident of workplace violence in the previous two years.⁴ While available data shows significant rates of verbal and physical abuse, it likely does not adequately represent the full impact of violence against physicians and healthcare workers, and physicians may decline to fully report incidents due to fear of retaliation or the belief that it is an unsolvable workplace hazard.

PROBLEM



Violence in healthcare workplaces has risen rapidly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rise in rates of assault and intimidation has implications beyond physical injuries sustained by those providing essential health care services.

Workplace violence has contributed to physician burnout being at an all-time high and has resulted in tangible workforce impacts.⁵ Despite skyrocketing rates of workplace violence against physicians and healthcare workers, there is currently no federal law that exists specifically to protect healthcare workers from assault or intimidation and address the ongoing crisis of violence against physicians.

SOLUTION



Violence against physicians and other healthcare providers cannot be accepted as “part of the job.” Congress should pass the bipartisan, bicameral Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act (H.R.2584/S.2768) to offer healthcare workers the same federal protections that commercial airline employees receive.

The SAVE Act establishes federal criminal penalties for violence against healthcare workers that would mirror protections in place for airline and airport employees while also ensuring statutory protection for patients experiencing a mental health crisis.

Please co-sponsor the SAVE Act (H.R.2584/S.2768) to deter violence towards physicians and our care teams in the workplace.

³ ACEP. “[ED Violence on the Rise.](#)” 2023

⁴ Soumi Saha. “[Premier Survey Reveals Key Insights on Workplace Violence Incidents in Healthcare.](#)” June 1, 2023.

⁵ Sara Berg. “[Pandemic Pushes US Doctor Burnout to All-Time High of 63%.](#)” September 15, 2022.