**OKLAHOMA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

**Resolution 6: A-2023**

**Introduced by:** Woody Jenkins MD

**Subject:** Healthcare Workplace Safety

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**WHEREAS**, On June 1st, 2022, the state of Oklahoma suffered and grieved the loss of three medical professionals and a patient from a senseless and unprovoked act of violence at a Saint Francis clinic in Tulsa, Oklahoma; and

**WHEREAS**, violence and aggression against healthcare workers is increasing at an alarming rate; and

**WHEREAS**, an April 2020 Bureau of Labor Statistics Fact Sheet found that healthcare workers accounted for 73 percent of all nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses due to violence in 2018. This number has been steadily growing since tracking of these specific events began in 2011(1); and

**WHEREAS**, the American College of Emergency Physicians has stated that while 70% of emergency physicians have reported acts of violence against them, only 3% press charges.  This gap is likely because physicians go into healthcare to help people and  feel compassion for our patients (2); and

**WHEREAS**, violence in emergency departments also exacerbates already high rates of burnout and impacts health care workers’ mental health.  Nearly nine in ten (87%) of emergency physicians report a loss of productivity because of violence, and 85% report emotional trauma and an increase in anxiety because of violence (3); and

**WHEREAS**, the World Health Organization has stated, “An integrated approach should be actively pursued at all levels of intervention based on the combined and balanced consideration of prevention and treatment.” Therefore, the WHO recommends holding employers accountable for ensuring both the safety and treatment of their employees after an act of violence has occurred (4); and

**WHEREAS**, Oklahoma State legislation was passed in 2020 which made assaulting a healthcare worker a felony and created a registry which collects data on healthcare workplace violence.  This law also requires that all healthcare providers (hospitals, clinics, and ambulances) report this information on individual incidents to a site developed and managed by the Oklahoma State Department of Health and also requires that specific signage be posted (Section 650.4 of Title 21 of the Oklahoma Statutes) (5); and

**WHEREAS**, in April 2021, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1195, the Workplace Violence Prevention for Healthcare and Social Service Workers Act.  This legislation would direct OSHA to issue a standard requiring employers in the healthcare and social services industries to develop and implement workplace violence prevention plans to protect physicians, nurses, social workers, emergency responders and others.  In May 2022, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) introduced the Workplace Violence Prevention in Healthcare and Social Service Workers Act (S.4182).  No action was taken.  For these to become law, they will need to be re-introduced in the 118th Congress (6)(7); and

**WHEREAS**, if Occupational Safety and Health Administration does not act on its own, federal legislation is necessary to ensure that all healthcare workers are not endangered by acts of violence based in their profession; therefore be it

**RESOVLED**, the Oklahoma State Medical Association acknowledges the need to reduce the incidence of antagonistic actions against physicians as well as other health care workers, outside as well as within the workplace, including physical violence, intimidating actions of word or deed, and cyber-attacks that include online bullying or harassment; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, the Oklahoma State Medical Association will work as opportunities present with all interested stakeholders to improve safety of health care workers and prevent violence against to health care workers; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** regulation on Occupational Safety and Health Administration and other relevant federal agencies to develop, implement, and enforce a national standard for preventing violence in the health care setting including requiring employers to have comprehensive workplace violence prevention plans; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, the Oklahoma State Medical Association is  committed to ensuring a safer and more secure environment for physicians and healthcare professionals by educating physicians with, at a minimum, Continuing Medical Education and educating the public.

References

1. <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-23-04-hospitals.pdf>
2. <https://www.acep.org/administration/violence-in-the-emergency-department-resources-for-a-safer-workplace/>
3. <https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/press-releases/2022/9-22-22-poll-increasing-violence-in-emergency-departments-contributes-to-physician-burnout-and-impacts-patient-care>
4. <https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/workplace/en/>
5. <https://www.sos.ok.gov/documents/legislation/57th/2020/2R/SB/1290.pdf>
6. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1195>
7. [https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Baldwin%20One-Pager%20Workplace%20Violence%20Prevention%20for%20Health%20Care%20and%20Social%20Service%20Workers%20Act.pdf](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Furldefense.proofpoint.com%2Fv2%2Furl%3Fu%3Dhttps-3A__www.baldwin.senate.gov_imo_media_doc_Baldwin-2520One-2DPager-2520Workplace-2520Violence-2520Prevention-2520for-2520Health-2520Care-2520and-2520Social-2520Service-2520Workers-2520Act.pdf%26d%3DDwQFaQ%26c%3DeuGZstcaTDllvimEN8b7jXrwqOf-v5A_CdpgnVfiiMM%26r%3DTCtM9odq_5hxgaZGN4gIRQ%26m%3DENfCUge8jr1BFd4kLfbBKarOYt8kl-E1507csdGjjR8%26s%3DiL3orcI6UM7HGbv_xUhpwEQDtX-8zlIDp0hqk-yJtV4%26e%3D&data=05%7C01%7Chod%40okmed.org%7Ce89e2ae363c643ddfcd708db24d5b4d5%7Cb9be9b6d561f45dbb0ad649686b6eb88%7C0%7C0%7C638144273553422639%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=jhiBRF6YYOyKBXyFj%2BEltn9CU1DAKZeu7gSs6Ncw84M%3D&reserved=0)