



AONE

American Organization of Nurse Executives, Hawai'i Chapter

February 8, 2013

Rep. Della Au Belatii, Chair
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Health

RE: HOUSE BILL 655, RELATING TO MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDERS

Good morning Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Morikawa and members of the Committee. On behalf of the Hawai'i Chapter, American Organization of Nurse Executives ("AONE"), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. AONE-Hawai'i supports HB 655, relating to medical services providers.

This measure would expand the offense of assault in the second degree to include harm to any medical services providers engaged in the performance of duty, rather than limit it to just emergency medical services providers. We believe this measure is an important step in protecting the professionals who provide much needed care and services in the community.

According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, more than 9,000 nurses and healthcare workers are injured or verbally or physically attacked each day on the job. In a recent seven-state study carried out by a Task Force on Workplace Violence, over 30 percent of registered nurses surveyed had been assaulted on the job, mostly by patients. This study included nurses in Hawai'i who reported being attacked with things like scissors, chairs, urinals, knives, and guns. In recent news, a patient attacked a nurse at Queen's Medical Center.

Incidents of assault are likely even more frequent than recent studies show. Many attacks go unreported due to concerns about insurance costs, worker's compensation, and hospital public relations. In addition to physical and emotional effects, these assaults have ramifications on the workforce. A recent nationwide study of nurses sponsored by the National Institute of Health revealed that one in three nurses over the age of 45 plans to quit their jobs when the recession ends because of attacks in the medical workplace. Others believe they must expect violence as part of their job.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics accurately expressed concern that legal penalties in many states are not severe enough to deter attacks against nurses. Medical providers abide by the Hippocratic Oath, promising to help those in need of medical attention. They deserve a greater level of legal protection for their service.

AONE-Hawai'i is a non-profit professional organization serving more than 100 member Nurse Executives throughout Hawai'i. We are an affiliate of AONE National, which has over 7,000 members nationwide. Our mission is to be the principle membership organization that represents and promotes the profession of Nurse Executives in the State of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Friday - Feb 9, 2013 – 8:30am
Conference Room 229

The House Committee on Health

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

From: Brigitte McKale
Vice President of Patient Services and Chief Nurse Executive

Re: HB 655 RELATING TO MEDICAL SERVICES PROVIDERS - Testimony in Strong Support

My name is Brigitte McKale, Vice President of Patient Services & Chief Nurse Executive for Pali Momi Medical Center. Pali Momi Medical Center is a nonprofit hospital located in West O'ahu. It is dedicated to the health and well-being of all Hawai'i residents. With 126 beds and more than 370 physicians on its medical staff, Pali Momi offers a full range of services. It has delivered many medical firsts for the community, including West O'ahu's only interventional cardiac catheterization unit to detect and treat heart disease, a fully integrated minimally invasive surgical suite, CT scan and MRI services, emergency services, a Women's Center, and the state's first Retina Center. Pali Momi is the only medical facility in Hawai'i that utilizes a team triage approach in its Emergency Room, where patients are promptly evaluated by an emergency physician. The American Heart Association has recognized the hospital for excellence in the treatment of coronary artery disease and heart failure, one of only a few hospitals in the nation. Pali Momi was founded in 1989 and is an affiliate of Hawai'i Pacific Health, the state's largest health care provider.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony supporting HB 655 which increases penalties for violence against medical service workers. This bill provides the same protection to any medical service provider as current emergency medical service providers receive while performing their duties.

All health care workers today face a significant increase in the number of job related violent incidents while on duty compared to other workers. Statistics show that there has been an increase in the number of nurses that have experienced assaults, and this is of great concern. At Pali Momi, our staff has been experiencing an increase in encounters with violent patients. Passage of this bill will help to deter assaults and provide a safer environment for all medical service workers. Therefore, we are in support of HB 655.

Thank you for your time. We ask that you pass this measure.