



**Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.**

**by  
Laura Reichhardt, MS, AGNP-C, APRN  
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

**Comments only related to SB 3044 SD1**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, thank you for hearing this measure, which classifies the offense of assault in the second degree of a health care security professional as a class C felony.

In 2018, the Hawai'i Legislature, in its great wisdom, expanded protections for health care workers including nurses, nurse aides, and other members of the healthcare team through Act 147, SLH 2018. The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration notes that workplace violence is a serious problem and that the field of Healthcare and Social Assistance experiences nearly four times the cases of violent injuries resulting in days away from work than private industry overall, and more than eight times the cases as compared to construction and manufacturing. Further, OSHA notes that inadequate security staff increase the risk of workplace violence and that injuries and stress to the workforce leads caregivers and healthcare professionals to leave the profession.

The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing commends Committee on Judiciary for hearing this measure and thanks the Committee for considering the comments provided. The Center thanks your committee for its commitment to the people of Hawai'i.

*The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is that through collaborative partnerships, the Center provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning, disseminates nursing knowledge to support excellence in practice and leadership development; promotes a diverse workforce and advocates for sound health policy to serve the changing health care needs of the people of Hawai'i.*



**February 27, 2020 at 10:30 am**  
**Conference Room 016**

**Senate Committee on Judiciary**

To: Chair Karl Rhoads  
Vice Chair Jarrett Keohokalole

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy  
Director of Government Affairs  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Testimony in Support**  
**SB 3044, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals**

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 20,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **support** for this measure. Preventing violence against healthcare workers remains a priority for HAH and its member organizations. Our members have expressed that this problem is expanding beyond hospitals into more settings of care, including long-term care facilities. We continue to work on this issue by collecting data and providing education and resources for our members, who are committed to protecting their employees against violence.

We appreciate the continued focus on ensuring the safety of healthcare professionals, including specially-trained healthcare security officers who keep clinical staff safe while they provide life-saving care, and for patients and their loved ones. The legislature has recognized that other staff in healthcare settings should be given increased protections under the law if they are attacked while on duty, and we would underscore the important role that trained healthcare security officers play in our hospitals and other settings of care.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



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To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Judiciary

From: Michael Holmberg, The Queen's Medical Center - West  
Date: Monday, February 24, 2020  
Hrg: Senate Committee on Judiciary Hearing; Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM in  
Room 016

Re: **Support for SB3044 SD1, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security  
Professionals**

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My name is Michael Holmberg and I am the Director of Security & Safety Services at The Queen's Medical Center - West. I would like to express my **strong support** for SB3044 SD1, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals. Under current law, it is a misdemeanor to assault a health care security professional. This bill would make it a Class C felony to intentionally or knowingly cause bodily harm to health care security professionals in a health care facility.

I believe this legislation recognizes the risk that health care security professionals face every day. For example, The Queen's Medical Center – West Oahu, opened in May of 2014, since the opening, we have had 62 assault incidents. Of those 62, 20 were against Security Officer with 2 resulted in injury and loss time from work.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

*The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.*

**SB-3044-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2020 11:03:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Elena Cabatu	Testifying for Hilo Medical Center	Support	No

Comments:

Hilo Medical Center stands in strong support of SB 3044 SD 1.



To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Judiciary

From: Cindy Kamikawa, President, Queen's North Hawai'i Community Hospital

Date: Monday, February 24, 2020

Hrg: Senate Committee on Judiciary Hearing; Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM in  
Room 016

Re: **Support for SB3044 SD1, Offenses against health care security professionals**

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The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a not-for-profit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, including Queen's North Hawai'i Community Hospital, 66 health care centers and labs, and more than 1,600 physicians statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's North Hawai'i Community Hospital (QNHCH) would like to express our **strong support** for SB3044 SD1, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals. Under current law, it is a misdemeanor to assault a health care security professional. This bill would recognize the critical role health care security professionals play as frontline staff in violent situations and as a member of the care team. The bill makes it a Class C felony to intentionally or knowingly cause bodily harm to health care security professionals while engaged in the performance of duty at a health care facility.

Queen's recognizes that health care workers, particularly our health care security professionals, face increased risks of workplace violence. It is currently a felony to assault certain classes of workers including: correctional workers, education workers, employees of state operated or contracted mental health facilities, emergency medical service workers, firefighters, and water safety officers. We believe that health care security professionals are at increased risk of sustaining violent injuries due to the nature of their profession and such risks qualifies them to be included in this group.

The United States Office of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) found that on average, incidents of serious workplace violence were four times more common in health care than in private industry.<sup>1</sup> Health care security personnel play a critical role in the care team at Queen's. They provide for a safe work place environment for all staff and patients by intervening

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<sup>1</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA); (2015), Workplace Violence in Healthcare: Understanding the Challenge. <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3826.pdf>

in potentially violent situations. Although, incidences of workplace violence are severely under reported, Queen's internal reports from Risk Management found that in calendar year 2019 there were over 75 incidences of threats of violence and physical assault at The Queen's Medical Center, Punchbowl and West Oahu campuses. These incidences did not include those involving behavioral health patients.

Over the years, Queen's has tracked Workers' Compensation claims related costs from combative patients cost the system and found that in FY2018, our system incurred costs over \$200,000. Workplace violence incidents have led to serious injuries for our staff resulting in medical treatment, disability claims, and leaves of absence. Costs to the health care system are also significant.

Hospital security personnel are unarmed and do not lay hands on patients unless direct to by clinical staff. In a review of The Queen's Medical Center, Punchbowl Security Dispatch data, total incidents have increased from 27,918 dispatches in 2018 to 28,328 in 2019. Not including incidences involving behavioral health patients, in 2018, there were over 25 assault related dispatch calls to the Queen's Security Team and 5 of them involved a Security Officer being assaulted.

We ask for your support in including health care security professionals in the protections afforded to others in high-risk occupations. This legislation will address this costly, emotional issue and help our health care security professionals to feel better protected while they carry out their line of work and help raise morale.

I commend the legislature for introducing this measure and thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Thursday, February 27, 2020; 10:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016**

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 3044, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO OFFENSES AGAINST HEALTH CARE SECURITY PROFESSIONALS.**

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 3044, Senate Draft 1, RELATING TO OFFENSES AGAINST HEALTH CARE SECURITY PROFESSIONALS.

The bill, as received by your Committee, would establish the offense of assault in the second degree on a health care security professional a class C felony. It would also take effect on January 2, 2020.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

As employers, FQHCs have an obligation to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of their employees, volunteers, patients, and patients' friends and family who accompany or visit patients at FQHC facilities. To the extent that this measure serves as a deterrent to violence perpetrated against health care workers or at health care facilities, HPCA wholeheartedly supports this effort.

Yet, it should also be noted that when violence is committed against a health care professional, especially when it occurs at a health care facility, a crime is committed not only against the individual, but against all of society. When persons go to a health care professional, it is when that person is most vulnerable -- he or she is sick, or injured, or stressed from concern over a loved one. These places have long been held as sanctuary. During war, hospitals were marked on their rooftops with red crosses so that they would not be bombed.

**Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2044, Senate Draft 1**  
**Thursday, February 27, 2020; 10:30 a.m.**  
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When violence is committed against a health care professional or at a health care facility, it harms all of society. It causes sick or injured persons to hesitate before seeking help, which might exacerbate their condition. It also dissuades persons from entering the field of health care. At a time when Hawaii is facing unprecedented shortages in physicians, nurses, specialists, and other health care professionals, especially in rural areas, incidents of violence against health care professionals or at health care facilities may likely cause youths to consider other fields for future employment.

**For these reasons, the HPCA urges your favorable consideration of this measure.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or [eabe@hawaiipca.net](mailto:eabe@hawaiipca.net).





To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Judiciary

From: Jan Kalanihuia, President, Molokai General Hospital

Date: Monday, February 24, 2020

Hrg: Senate Committee on Judiciary Hearing; Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM in  
Room 016

Re: **Support for SB3044 SD1, Offenses against health care security professionals**

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The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a not-for-profit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, including Molokai General Hospital, 66 health care centers and labs, and more than 1,600 physicians statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Molokai General Hospital would like to express our **strong support** for SB3044 SD1, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals. Under current law, it is a misdemeanor to assault a health care security professional. This bill would recognize the critical role health care security professionals play as frontline staff in violent situations and as a member of the care team. The bill makes it a Class C felony to intentionally or knowingly cause bodily harm to health care security professionals while engaged in the performance of duty at a health care facility.

Queen's recognizes that health care workers, particularly our health care security professionals, face increased risks of workplace violence. It is currently a felony to assault certain classes of workers including: correctional workers, education workers, employees of state operated or contracted mental health facilities, emergency medical service workers, firefighters, and water safety officers. We believe that health care security professionals are at increased risk of sustaining violent injuries due to the nature of their profession and such risks qualifies them to be included in this group.

The United States Office of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) found that on average, incidents of serious workplace violence were four times more common in health care than in private industry.<sup>1</sup> Health care security personnel play a critical role in the care team at

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Queen's. They provide for a safe work place environment for all staff and patients by intervening in potentially violent situations. Although, incidences of workplace violence are severely under reported, Queen's internal reports from Risk Management found that in calendar year 2019 there were over 75 incidences of threats of violence and physical assault at The Queen's Medical Center, Punchbowl and West Oahu campuses. These incidences did not include those involving behavioral health patients.

Over the years, Queen's has tracked Workers' Compensation claims related costs from combative patients cost the system and found that in FY2018, our system incurred costs over \$200,000. Workplace violence incidents have led to serious injuries for our staff resulting in medical treatment, disability claims, and leaves of absence. Costs to the health care system are also significant.

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We ask for your support in including health care security professionals in the protections afforded to others in high-risk occupations. This legislation will address this costly, emotional issue and help our health care security professionals to feel better protected while they carry out their line of work and help raise morale.

I commend the legislature for introducing this measure and thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.



## THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Judiciary

From: Jason C. Chang, President, The Queen's Medical Center and Chief Operating Officer,  
The Queen's Health Systems  
Shereen Johnson, Director, Security and Safety, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: Monday, February 24, 2020

Hrg: Senate Committee on Judiciary Hearing; Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM in  
Room 016

Re: **Support for SB3044 SD1, Offenses against health care security professionals**

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than in private industry.<sup>1</sup> Health care security personnel play a critical role in the care team at Queen's. They provide for a safe work place environment for all staff and patients by intervening in potentially violent situations. Although, incidences workplace violence is severely under reported, Queen's internal reports from Risk Management found that in calendar year 2019 there were over 75 incidences of threats of violence and physical assault at The Queen's Medical Center, Punchbowl and West Oahu campuses. These incidences did not include those involving behavioral health patients.

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**SB-3044-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2020 5:38:40 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/27/2020 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ed Howard	Testifying for Adventist Health	Support	Yes

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ed Howard and I am the VP Corporate Director of Healthcare Security for Adventist Health-West. Adventist Health Castle, located in Kailua, Hawaii is one of 22 hospitals in our healthcare system. I am responsible for oversight and management of our system's healthcare security services that is provided to our system's 22 hospitals and 300 clinics located throughout California, Oregon and Hawaii. Adventist Health has over 30,000 employees and employs approximately 220 healthcare security professionals. I am also the Hawaii Chapter Chairman for the International Association of Healthcare Security and Safety (IAHSS). Our Hawaii Chapter consists of healthcare security, safety and emergency preparedness professionals who represent our Hawaii hospitals and specialize in performing proactive protective duties to ensure that our healthcare environments are safe and secure.

I am submitting this testimony in **STRONG** support of S.B. 3044. As a retired 26 year law enforcement officer in Hawaii, I can honestly state that working in the healthcare setting for the last 7 years has been the MOST violent environment that I have worked in, much more violent than working in law enforcement. The violence that occurs in the healthcare setting is **consistent** and an ever-present high risk to staff. Violence in the healthcare setting is so prevalent that our regulatory bodies that surveys and inspects our hospitals expect that violence be addressed through risk assessments, specific plans, policies, processes and training. In California, landmark legislation has been passed that highly regulates workplace violence in the healthcare setting for hospitals and standards have been issued by California OSHA that cover mandatory reporting, training, prevention, proactive assessments and required processes and policies to address the violence problem. I predict that in the next few years workplace violence standards for healthcare will be in place across the mainland U.S. as there currently are bills in Congress to address this problem. Hawaii is not unique to this problem.

To help one understand and become educated about the seriousness of the violence problem in the healthcare setting, one can conduct searches on the internet and literally find statistics, white papers, studies, data, articles, assessment templates and other educational material from practically every association and professional organization associated with healthcare. From professional clinicians to risk managers to healthcare



executives, violence is a recognized problem that impacts the delivery of care, safety of staff and contributes to unsafe work environments.

I would now like to address the healthcare security professional and how this bill would have a positive impact for them. First, it should be understood that security guards or officers are not all the same. Like other industries, there is specialization and in the security industry, healthcare security officers are positively regarded for their abilities to work in a highly regulated industry, dealing with violence in a protective and proactive manner, while having the ability to provide superior customer service leading to high patient satisfaction. Healthcare security officers are top level security professionals, who are specially selected, trained and expected to deal with the many challenges, criminal activity and dangerous behaviors that are common exposures in the line of duty, very similar to what law enforcement officers are exposed too.

Healthcare security officers are the first line of defense as well as first responders within hospital and healthcare settings to directly intervene and manage violence. There are processes, procedures, policies and industry best practices that are in place for healthcare security officers to address violent behaviors from, "aggressors" consisting of patients, visitors and family members. Healthcare security officers play a vital role of protecting clinical staff as these staff members are required to deal with violent and aggressive patients, working in close proximity. Many of these patients arrive in agitated states caused by severe pain, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health problems, homeless with weapons etc. These are what we call, "high risk" patients. These "high risk" patients have the most propensity to exhibit violence and become assaultive toward staff and others. Healthcare security officers will without hesitation confront, engage and deal with these patients in order to ensure staff and others are safe.

Statistics show that approximately 90% of assaults on healthcare staff are committed by patients. Staff are trained to observe escalating agitated and aggressive behaviors and once these behaviors are observed, processes to manage a potential violent issue involve a security response and intervention, many times leading to the healthcare security officer being directly threatened with bodily harm or exposed to an actual physical assault in order to be the, "protector" for all. In essence, the healthcare security officer places themselves in harms way for the protection of all, without any weapons or other protective tools.

Another interesting trend that we are seeing an increase in, involve violence toward staff from family members and visitors. Healthcare security officers often respond to situations where family members and visitors become violent with patient care staff. Clinical staff have come to truly expect and rely on healthcare security's expertise and major role in managing aggressive and violent behaviors that will often time subject the officer to physical assault.

As previously stated, our healthcare security officers perform their jobs very much as our police and law enforcement officers do. With the violence so prevalent at our

hospitals and healthcare settings, our highly trained healthcare security professionals need similar protections as a police officer would. Not affording our healthcare security professionals **similar** protections as police and law enforcement, or the **same** as our healthcare teams, there is an undervalue of the risks that they face and the work that they provide.

I believe that passing this legislation would significantly and rightfully provide the recognition of the risks that our healthcare security professionals are exposed to each and every day. Our healthcare professionals need the protections to do their jobs and being physically assaulted is not part of their jobs.

I thank you for your attention with this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Ed Howard



Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM  
Conference Room 016

**Senate Committee on Judiciary**

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

From: Fego Alconcel  
Safety and Security Director

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 3044, SD1  
Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals**

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My name is Fego Alconcel and I am the Director of Security at Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children (Kapi'olani) is an affiliate of Hawaii Pacific Health. Kapi'olani Medical Center is the state's only maternity, newborn and pediatric specialty hospital. It is also a tertiary care, medical teaching and research facility. Specialty services for patients throughout Hawai'i and the Pacific Region include intensive care for infants and children, 24-hour emergency pediatric care, air transport, maternal-fetal medicine and high-risk perinatal care.

**I write in support of SB 3044, SD1** which classifies the offense of assault in second degree of a health care security professional as a Class C felony.

All health care and human services professionals today face a significant increase in the number of job related violent incidents while on duty compared to other workers. Statistics show that workers in hospitals, nursing homes and other health care settings face significant risks of workplace violence. OSHA also found that health care accounts for nearly as many serious violent injuries as all other industries combined, and this is of great concern. At Kapi'olani our staff has been experiencing an increase in encounters with violent patients.

Under existing law, health care security professionals are not included as one of the protected categories of health care professionals who may press felony charges when they are assaulted while performing their duties on the job. Health care security professionals are unarmed and do not lay hands on patients unless directed to do so by hospital or clinic staff. As our health care security staff must intervene when patients and other individuals become physically violent, they should be afforded the protection the



law allows other health care professionals. This measure would give our health care security professionals that protection.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM  
Conference Room 016

**Senate Committee on Judiciary**

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

From: Shane Correia  
Safety and Security Director

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 3044, SD1  
Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals**

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My name is Shane Correia, and I am the Director of Security for Straub Medical Center (Straub). Straub is an affiliate of Hawaii Pacific Health. Founded in 1921, Straub includes a 159-bed hospital in Honolulu, a network of neighborhood clinics and a visiting specialist program that reaches throughout the state of Hawai'i. With over 200 physicians who are leaders in their fields, Straub provides its patients with diagnoses and treatments for more than 32 different medical specialties, including bone and joint, heart, cancer, endocrinology/diabetes, family medicine, gastroenterology, geriatric medicine, internal medicine, vascular and urology.

**I write in support of SB 3044, SD1** which classifies the offense of assault in second degree of a health care security professional as a Class C felony.

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## THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

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To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Judiciary

From: Susan R. Murray, Senior Vice President, West O'ahu Region  
Chief Operating Officer, The Queen's Medical Center-West O'ahu

Date: Monday, February 24, 2020

Hrg: Senate Committee on Judiciary Hearing; Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM in Room 016

Re: **Support for SB3044 SD1, Offenses against health care security professionals**

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Over the years, Queen's has tracked Workers' Compensation claims related costs from combative patients cost the system and found that in FY2018, our system incurred costs over \$200,000. Workplace violence incidents have led to serious injuries for our staff resulting in medical treatment, disability claims, and leaves of absence. Costs to the health care system are also significant.

Hospital security personnel are unarmed and do not lay hands on patients unless directed to by clinical staff. In a review of The Queen's Medical Center, Punchbowl Security Dispatch data, total incidents have increased from 27,918 dispatches in 2018 to 28,328 in 2019. Not including incidences involving behavioral health patients, in 2018, there were over 25 assault related dispatch calls to the Queen's Security Team and 5 of them involved a Security Officer being assaulted.

We ask for your support in including health care security professionals in the protections afforded to others in high-risk occupations. This legislation will address this costly, emotional issue and help our health care security professionals to feel better protected while they carry out their line of work and help raise morale.

I commend the legislature for introducing this measure and thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Judiciary

From: Boyd Hurley, Security Manager, The Queen's Medical Center

Date: Monday, February 24, 2020

Hrg: Senate Committee on Judiciary Hearing; Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM in  
Room 016

Re: **Support for SB3044 SD1, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security  
Professionals**

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My name is Boyd Hurley and I am a Security Manager at The Queen's Medical Center. I would like to express my **strong support** for SB3044 SD1 Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals. Under current law, it is a misdemeanor to assault a health care security professional. This bill would make it a Class C felony to intentionally or knowingly cause bodily harm to health care security professionals while engaged in the performance of duty at a health care facility.

I have been employed at The Queen's Medical Center for about 25 years. Within the past few years there has been a big increase in violence against hospital staff, especially assault cases that are intentional and unprovoked. Below are two examples of firsthand accounts collected from health care security professionals at The Queen's Medical Center Punchbowl campus.

#### Assault on a Security Officer

One of my security officers was called to an outpatient department on a report of a male sitting in the waiting room for a while with no appointment. The security officer responded and approached the male to ask if he had an appointment. The male did not answer, got up, and walked out towards the lobby. He forgot to grab a bag that was alongside his chair so the security officer grabbed the bag and followed the male to the lobby to return it to him. When the officer approached the male and told him he forgot his bag on the floor, the male without any warning turned and punched my officer in the face causing him to fall to the ground. The male then jumped on the officer and continued to assault him. The officer was limp and defenseless during the assault. Just at that moment, another security officer saw the assault occurring, detained the male, and put him in handcuffs. The injured officer was transported to the Emergency Department (ED) where he was treated for injuries to his nose and left eye socket. The perpetrator was arrested by HPD.

#### Assault on a Security Supervisor

A security supervisor was called by staff to stand by the room of a patient who had already assaulted four nurses during his stay. The security supervisor arrived on the unit and stood by the doorway while staff prepared to go in the room to provide treatment. When the security

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supervisor turned his back to the patient to answer a question from a staffer outside the room, the patient got out of bed and struck him in the face with a closed fist. The security supervisor fell to the ground, but managed to protect himself and subdue the patient while other staff responded to assist. The security supervisor suffered injury to the nose and eye socket and HPD was called.

These are just a few examples of the kind of violence our hospital security professionals face every day. I believe that this legislation would rightfully recognize the risks that our health care security professionals face just going to work. It is currently a felony to assault certain classes of workers including: correctional workers, education workers, employees of state operated or contracted mental health facilities, emergency medical service workers, firefighters, and water safety officers. The threats that we face every day qualifies health care security professionals to be included in this group.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.



To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair  
Members, Committee on Judiciary

From: Mimi Harris, VP Patient Care and Chief Nursing Officer, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2020

Hrg: Senate Committee on Judiciary; Thursday, February 27, 2020 at 10:30 AM in Room 016

Re: **Support for SB3044 SD1, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals**

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My name is Mimi Harris, and I am a Vice President for Patient Care and the Chief Nursing Officer at The Queen's Health Systems. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony I would like to express my **strong support** for SB3044 SD1, Relating to Offenses Against Health Care Security Professionals. Under current law, it is a misdemeanor to assault a health care security professional. This bill would make it a Class C felony to intentionally or knowingly cause bodily harm to health care security professionals in a health care facility.

As the Chief Nursing Officer at the Queen's Health Systems I have the opportunity to hear in our "Daily Safety Briefing's" the frequent occurrences in which nurses, technicians, aides, phlebotomist's and our security team are kicked, punched or verbally abused by patients. In addition to bedside care providers, our health care security professionals are put in harms' way on a daily basis as they conduct their jobs to protect the staff and patients from those who may be abusive, reckless or insubordinate. When these acts are a result of illness or mental health issues, they can be excused. However when these acts are intentional, and individuals choose to inflict harm on our security professionals it is only fair that the same protection that other health care professionals are provided are also made available to our security team. Despite their incredible negotiation, and de-escalation skills, there are times when these techniques do not prevail, and patients choose to step over the line knowing there are no real consequences. We have examples of our security team members requiring stiches, medical care and long term disability due to aggressive attacks by patients.

Please vote in favor of this bill and help send the message that it is not acceptable to harm those who are doing their best to protect the safety of our patients and staff.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.





**LATE**

February 26, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety (IAHSS) is very supportive of proposed state of Hawaii Bill SB3044 SD1 which states that offenses of Assault in the second degree against a healthcare security professional is a class C felony.

The data clearly indicates that workplace violence is four times more common in healthcare than any other industry and security professionals are on the front lines trying to create a safe work and care environment for healthcare workers. This Bill will provide some legal leverage for security professionals to gain compliance or have charges filed against person(s) assaulting healthcare workers. IAHSS would like to see other States pass similar Bills.

Regards,

Roy E. Williams, III, CHPA, CPP  
President, IAHSS

Marilyn Hollier, CHPA, CPP  
IAHSS Interim Executive Director