

Resolution 3: Addressing Violence against Nurses and Healthcare Workers

“Your Nurse Wears Combat Boots”

Addressing Violence Against Nurses and Healthcare Workers

Whereas nurses and healthcare workers in Montana do not receive equal legislative protection against assault as law enforcement officers, prisoners, peace officers, police dogs, and sports officials;

Whereas there is a perpetual over-arching belief whether its perceived, threatened, or actual violent acts are “part of the job” for nurses and healthcare workers;

Whereas MNA formed a Violence Taskforce and created the “Your Nurse Wears Combat Boots” campaign in 2016 to raise awareness, educate, and get legislation passed;

Whereas nurses suffering from PTSD symptoms experience distressing emotions, difficulty thinking, withdrawal from patients, absenteeism, and job changes;

Whereas the majority of nurses suffering a violent act never formally report it making the incidence of violence much lower than what is actually occurring;

Whereas pandemic-related pressures on healthcare have accelerated this violence as evidenced by the rate of violence in hospitals increasing by 25 percent in one year alone from 2019 to 2020¹ and the correlation between poor staffing and higher incidence of violence in healthcare is well known and documented even before the pandemic;

Whereas violence against nurses and healthcare workers is a serious and growing problem exacerbated by inadequate staffing and resources leading to the majority of nurses suffering a violent act and never formally reporting it making the incidence of violence much lower than what is actually occurring; and

Whereas nurses, healthcare, and social services workers experience 76 percent of **all** reported workplace violence injuries in the American labor force, the number of actual incidents of workplace violence is likely to be much higher;² now, therefore, be it

Resolved, MNA, along with national affiliates, ANA and AFTNHP, will continue its efforts to secure federal workplace violence protections through passage of the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act and OSHA promulgation of the interim standard within one year;

Resolved, MNA will support the work of its healthcare affiliates to address workplace violence in legislation, through collective bargaining, and other local, state, and national work; and encourage healthcare workers to report and press charges against their attackers; and

Resolved, MNA formally re-launch the “Your Nurse Wears Combat Boots” campaign, and continue to lobby for meaningful legislation at the state level to protect nurses and healthcare workers; and

Resolved, MNA will secure a sponsor and draft a bill for the 2023 legislature making assault against nurses and healthcare workers prosecuted with an increased penalty.

¹Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect, 2022 | AFL-CIO (aflcio.org)

²BLS, SOII, 2020, Table R8.