

To: Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Chris Buesing, Director of Workers Compensation and Workforce Safety, Stormont Vail Health

Date: March 24, 2023

RE: Proponent Testimony for House Bill 2023

On behalf of Stormont Vail Health and its 5,700 employees, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2023.

My name is Chris Buesing and I am the Director for Workers Compensation and Workforce Safety for Stormont Vail Health, and I also chair the Stormont Vail Workplace Violence Committee.

Stormont Vail Health has made many changes in an effort to reduce the frequency of workplace violence and to reduce the impact of workplace violence when it happens.

- Stormont notes patient charts for risk of violence and has policies in place to support staff on how to respond.
- We review all workplace violence events weekly and sit in small groups with all new employees to discuss workplace violence.
- Stormont has doubled security staff and created response teams to converge on workplace violence events as they are happening.
- We have a workplace violence hazard assessment process to help us identify potential areas or situations that could lead to workplace violence.

Even with all of these processes and programs in place we still experience workplace violence.

Stormont Vail Health does understand that when patients and visitors come onto our site, it is for stressful or traumatic situations. Understanding that is why we will continue to focus on what can be done to protect our staff and patients as they enter our system. Knowing all of that, we are asking for help. Our policies and training focuses on how to interact with patients in many types of situations. But some patients and visitors still make the choice to turn to verbal abuse or physical violence when interacting with our staff. For those situations, we need additional support such as House Bill 2023. This House Bill will not solve the problems but is a step in the right direction to show healthcare providers the work they do matters, and the state supports them in that work.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has created new rules for us to follow to keep healthcare workers safer so they are more willing to stay in the profession. Healthcare is in a staffing crisis in general. We need current employees and future employees to feel supported and heard. House Bill 2023 is one step in the process of helping everyone feel supported in the healthcare setting. I am here to ask for your help now. Help keep us safe so we can continue to take care of you, your family, your friends, your peers and even those that act violently towards us as we care for them.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2023. We appreciate the committee considering this crucial matter.