

## Kansas State Nurses Association Support House Bill 2620

February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Dear Chairman and Committee,

The Kansas State Nurses Association is proud to support HB 2620 to protect our nurses from violence in the workplace.

The Kansas State Nurses Association (KSNA) is the largest nursing association in Kansas representing thousands of RNs throughout the state. KSNA is a constituent member of the American Nurses Association (ANA) which is the largest in our country representing over 3 million nurses.

In the ANA Code of Ethics, nurses are responsible to maintain “create an ethical environment and culture of civility and kindness, treating colleagues, coworkers, employees, students, and others with dignity and respect”. Nurses should be afforded the same kind of respect and not subject to violence of any kind. Unfortunately, this has become all too common and is one of several reasons we are losing the bedside nurse in all areas of care. Negative effects include decreased job satisfaction, reduced organizational commitment, decreased personal health, and added direct and indirect costs to employers and RNs (Rodwell, Brunetto, Demir, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton, 2014; Smith, Andrusyszyn, & Spence Laschinger, 2010).

All RNs and employers in all settings, including practice, academia, and research, must collaborate to create a culture of respect that is free of incivility, bullying, and workplace violence. Evidence-based best practices must be implemented to prevent and mitigate incivility, bullying, and workplace violence; to promote the health, safety, and wellness of RNs; and to ensure optimal outcomes across the health care continuum. Though this testimony is written specifically for RNs, it is also relevant to other health care professionals and stakeholders who collaborate to create and sustain a safe and healthy interprofessional work environment. Stakeholders who have a relationship with the worksite also have a responsibility to address incivility, bullying, and workplace violence.

Those who experience workplace incivility, bullying, or violence know firsthand their detrimental effects, especially when their experiences are not taken seriously by coworkers and supervisors. Those harmful effects have been described as additive in that they accumulate burden and can become synergistic. Moreover, their combined effects can go beyond what each can do alone. Workplace violence consists of physically and psychologically damaging actions that occur in the workplace or while on duty (National Institute for Occupational Safety

and Health [NIOSH], 2002). The Bureau of Labor Statistics releases an annual report about injuries and illnesses resulting in time away from work in the United States. In the health care and social assistance sectors, 13% of days away from work were the result of violence in 2013, and this rate has increased in recent years (U.S. Department of Labor [DOL], Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). According to a recent ANA survey of 3,765 registered nurses and nursing students, 43% of respondents have been verbally and/or physically threatened by a patient or family member of a patient. Additionally, 24% of respondents have been physically assaulted by a patient or family member of a patient while at work (ANA & LCWA Research Group, 2014). Employee retention can also become more difficult.

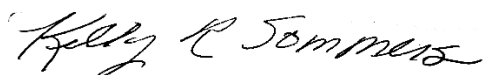
Such effects may impair clinical judgment to the extent that nurse performance is affected. For example, the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (2009) examined the impact that intimidation of nurses had on medication errors. In the subsample, 7% of RNs stated that intimidation had led to a medication error. Other studies report an increase in errors related to patient safety (Sofield & Salmond, 2003) and to an increased incidence of patient falls, delayed medication administration, and medication errors (Roche, Diers, Duffield, & Catling-Paull, 2010). If confidence and competence decrease as a result of incivility, bullying, and workplace violence, this result can adversely affect the quality of patient care and care outcomes (Deans, 2004b; Leivers, 2004).

A safe work environment promotes physical and psychological well-being. Adoption of HB 2620, is the beginning of a unified effort to jointly create and nurture a healthy, safe, and respectful work environment in which positive health outcomes are the highest priority.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best regards,

**Kansas State Nurses Association Board of Directors**



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