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Assembly California Legislature

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AB 2975 – Secure Hospitals for All

PURPOSE

Assembly Bill 2975 seeks to improve hospital safety by requiring metal detectors with appropriate staffing at the entrances of the labor and delivery department, emergency department and main lobby. Healthcare workers should be focused on providing high-quality care to their patients not confiscating weapons.

BACKGROUND

In recent years there has been a growing focus and awareness of workplace violence in healthcare settings. This violence exacerbates the stress and burnout of frontline workers and contributes to our healthcare workforce shortage.

Since 2017 California has required hospitals to report healthcare workplace violence incidents, which is defined as either the use of physical force that results in an injury or an incident involving the use of a firearm or other dangerous weapon.

An example of such an incident, is the stabbing that took place at Encino Hospital in 2022. A patient came in with a knife and became enraged about the wait times. The patient stabbed a nurse and two other workers responding to the incident were also stabbed. The Emergency Department was shut down, which delayed access to care for everyone in that community, including the three healthcare workers who had to be driven to a different hospital for care.

Healthcare workers are five times more likely to face violence in the workplace than any other profession, and unfortunately, they are often required to search and seize weapons from visitors and patients. Having healthcare

workers confiscate weapons from patients and visitors unnecessarily puts them at risk for these workplace violence incidents.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law requires hospitals in California to develop workplace violence prevention plans under Health and Safety Code 1257.7.

Existing law also requires hospitals to do an annual security and safety assessment and develop a security plan.

Labor Code 6401.8, also requires the CalOSHA standards board to develop workplace standards and prevention plans. Neither standard requires a metal detector at the entrance of a hospital.

SUMMARY

Healthcare workers are on the front lines of patient care and often face patients or family members in crisis. As we have seen workplace violence in healthcare settings is on the rise. This creates a severe impact on the healthcare workforce and patients. AB 2975 proposes to enhance the required safety measures for hospitals by requiring common-sense measures, such as properly staffed metal detector at specific entrances, to ensure that hospitals remain a safe place of healing, not violence.

SUPPORT

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) (Sponsor)

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