

To: The Honorable Representatives of the Kansas House

From: Daytha Willson, RN-ADN, RN-BSN

Re: House Bill No. 2620

Honorable chairman and committee members,

I'd like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address your committee in support of HB2620. I've been involved in the medical community for over half of my life now and started as a volunteer at age 19. I've held an active license as a nurse in the state of Kansas for 14 years serving the people of our state. I've worked in many different environments as a nurse upholding my license within good standards to the Kansas Board of Nursing. My primary position, time and passion is emergency room medicine where I have dedicated my life career too. I've worked in many different emergency room across the state but most of my experience is in Wichita, KS.

My presence here today before your committee is to be the voice for those of us who are serving in the healthcare community. Unfortunately, in midst of a pandemic many obstacles continue to present itself making it harder to serve the public. However, this topic is often not given the time and attention it is needed so healthcare workers can remain safe pre and post pandemic. I stand before your committee today pleading for my colleagues and the medical profession to increase penalties against those who violate the safety of those providing humanitarian support.

HB2620 will assist in giving those who are providing care a sense of security that the state and lawmakers value our work and our lives. Healthcare workers are often vulnerable to violence and being the first on scene when an emergency occurs. We are at times their prior to law enforcement, security and are unarmed as we assist in providing medical treatment to those who are in need of care. The Geneva Convention was a diplomatic treaties that provides an international agreements even at a time of war protecting those who are rendering medical aid. The current statute statues many providers with little to no support and often put in positions that offenders know we have no legal means to hold them accountable in their actions. HB2620 will give those of us providing care a sense of security that our lives and profession receives the respect due to them as we selflessly put ourselves in a position to assist and serve the public.

Personal examples I'd like to provide to legislators:

1. D.S, RN: April 2017 a mental health RN in the assessment center at Via Christi St. Joe Campus was assaulted. A standoff occurred in Valley Center, KS and the offender was brought to St. Joe for psychiatric care. This person also had been told by LEO used his son as a human shield. He was left in our facilities for mental health treatment which could of easily been done at a county jail. That evening D.S.

RN went to patient's room to give him oral meds. The nurse was appropriate during contact and just walked into room. She was punched with closed fist directly to her face. The assessment team called for help and security responded. I took D.S., RN as the charge nurse for the ER to be cared for in our facility. She was brought to an ER room and house supervisor and physician on Dr. Vayda was notified. Shortly after bringing her to the room she started to seize. She was taken for CT and had a nasal fracture and previous what appeared to be an aneurysm clip. She hadn't had seizures or been on meds per decades. She was transferred as a trauma to our sister facility St. Francis.

2. M.M, EMT. November 2017. I'm attaching her Facebook post of where she encountered a violent patient in triage with no warning. Her cochlear implants that cost \$11,000 were destroyed in the attack against her. She was also a student and had no vacation hours since she worked prn. She lost many work hours and dealt with concussion syndrome for a short time as well not including the mental stress and anxiety after being a victim in a traumatic assault.

3. I'm also including pictures of weapons that were taken off of patients who have received care in our facility. These patients may or may not need law enforcement engagement and called these weapons and drug paraphernalia into our facility. This is evidence that at times our healthcare team is ones who are first put in a vulnerable position with the public who needs to understand we are there for a humanitarian effort and the state is willing to protect us.

HB2620 will allow healthcare providers to be able to care for patients and provide statutory protections to a high risk population of public servants. Healthcare providers should feel safe and supported as they care for those who need us.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of those serving the Kansas public in healthcare,

Daytha Willson, RN-ADN, RN-BSN

Wichita, KS



