



**GENERAL
TEAMSTERS
LOCAL 959
STATE OF ALASKA**

Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Rick Boyles, Secretary-Treasurer

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February 2, 2018

Honorable Matt Claman and Chuck Kopp
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 118
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 312 – Workplace Violence in Health Care Facilities

Dear Representatives Claman and Kopp:

On behalf of the Teamster members we represent at South Peninsula Hospital, Inc. and Kodiak Island, we want to thank both of you for introducing HB 312 – Workplace Violence in Health care Facilities; specifically relating to arrest without a warrant for assault in the fourth degree at a health care facility.

Workplace violence is a serious problem. In hospitals, and other healthcare facilities, possible sources of violence include patients, visitors, intruders and even coworkers. Health care professionals including Doctors, Nurses, Emergency Room Technicians, and CNA's experience verbal threats and physical attacks by patients (usually drug and or alcohol related).

On average, incidents of workplace violence are more common in healthcare than in private industry. Many of the assaults fall in the category of fourth degree, requiring the officer to have a warrant in order to arrest. Most of these assaults occur in the late night hours, making it difficult at best, for an officer to attain a warrant. Eliminating the need for a warrant allows the offending individual to be removed from the healthcare facility quicker.

The bill also allows sentencing that could be considered above the presumptive range for a felony offense. We believe this sends a strong message not only to our Teamster Health Care professionals, but all health care professionals around the state.

Workplace violence has impacted many of our members over the years, requiring not only medical treatment, lost time from the job, but also serious stress and fatigue issue. As such, this creates an additional burden on Worker Compensation cost.

HB 312 may not end violence in healthcare facilities but can be one of many tools that healthcare facilities can utilize as they strive to create a more effective and comprehensive workplace violence plan. On behalf of our Teamster Healthcare professionals, we thank you and ask the members of the Judiciary committee to support the bill as well.

Sincerely,
TEAMSTERS LOCAL 959

Barbara Huff Tuckness
Director Government and Legislative Affairs

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