

Violence Against Health Care Workers

Summary

The 2015 Minnesota Legislature passed a law that amends the hospital licensing requirement under Minnesota Statutes, Section 144.566, and mandates that hospitals must design and implement preparedness and incident response plans for acts of violence that occur on their premises, and provide training to their staff. The law also provides funding to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to provide training and resources to healthcare providers related to violence prevention and response.

Background

Since the establishment of the Minnesota Adverse Health Events Reporting Law in 2003, MDH has been collecting data on violent events that occur in hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers that lead to serious injury or death of a patient or staff member. In 2013, a group of Minnesota healthcare facilities raised concerns about incidents that didn't rise to that level in terms of harm to patients or staff, but that had a persistent negative effect on staff and patient safety and staff morale, and asked for help in preventing and responding to these incidents within their organizations. In response, MDH convened a group that included the Minnesota Hospital Association, Minnesota Medical Association, Minnesota Nurses Association, Care Providers of Minnesota, Leading Age Minnesota and a number of healthcare facilities throughout the state - the Prevention of Violence in Healthcare workgroup - to study the issue, and to come up with recommendations and best practices to be used throughout the state.

The best practices, in the form of a [roadmap/gap analysis](#) with accompanying [toolkit](#), were shared statewide in August of 2014 and over 100 organizations signed on to

participate in a pilot study to implement the practices and attend educational sessions.

In response to continuing concerns about high-profile incidents of violence against health care workers, legislation was brought forward in 2015 to establish new training and prevention plan requirements.

Statute

The licensing requirements under Minnesota Statutes, Section 144.566 were changed to include that by January 15, 2016, all hospitals in Minnesota must:

- Designate a committee of healthcare workers to develop preparedness and incident response action plans to acts of violence;
- Review action plans at least annually;
- Make action plans available to local law enforcement and, as appropriate, to collective bargaining units;
- Provide training to all healthcare workers employed or contracted with the hospital on safety during acts of violence (annually and upon hire). Training must include, at a minimum:
 - Safety guidelines for response to and de-escalation of an act of violence;

- Ways to identify potentially violent or abusive situations; and
- The hospital's incident response reaction plan and violence prevention plan;
- As a part of its annual review, the hospital must review with the designated committee:
 - The effectiveness of its action plans;
 - The most recent gap analysis; and
 - The number of acts of violence that occurred in the hospital during the previous year, as well as injuries that occurred.

[Prevention of Violence
\(http://www.health.state.mn.us/patientsafety/preventionofviolence/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/patientsafety/preventionofviolence/index.html)

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The commissioner may impose an administrative fine of up to \$250 on a hospital for failure to comply with the requirements of this law.

The law also provides a onetime appropriation to MDH of \$50,000 to be used in fiscal years 2016 and 2017 to continue the prevention of violence in health care program and create violence prevention resources for hospitals and other health care providers to use in training their staff on violence prevention.

Rationale

While many organizations have voluntarily adopted some or all of the strategies outlined in the violence prevention gap analysis, including establishing multi-disciplinary teams, continued work is needed to assist organizations throughout the state to provide training to all staff, form a violence prevention committee within every hospital, and develop and implement plans to prevent and respond to incidents of violence.

Additional Information

For more information on this law or other violence against health care worker information, please visit: