

Prevalence and Prevention of Workplace Violence among the Nursing Workforce of Texas

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Background and Significance

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, healthcare and social assistance workers had the highest incidence of Workplace Violence (WPV) from 2021 to 2022.¹ A nationwide survey conducted in 2022 by National Nurses United found that 81.6% of nurses have experienced at least one type of WPV in the past year.² WPV can affect nurses’ well-being and can discourage current and future nurses from remaining in or joining the profession. Current policies aimed at addressing WPV among healthcare workers in Texas include SB 240 from the Texas 88th regular legislative session, which requires facilities to adopt, implement, and enforce a WPV prevention policy.³ Surveying both individual nurses and their employers can provide an idea of the magnitude of the issue and guide stakeholders towards potential solutions.

Major Outcomes


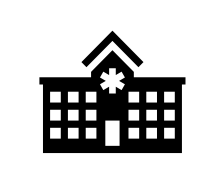


-  295 hospitals, 219 NFs, and 77 HHHCs responded.
-  95.4% of hospitals and 45.3% of NFs have nurse staffing committees; 67.3% of those hospitals and 80.0% of those NFs do consider incidents of WPV when developing and evaluating nurse staffing plans.
-  97.6% of hospitals, 84.5% of NFs, and 81.8% of HHHC agencies track incidents of violence. Over 60% of employers tracked incidents of threat, sexual harassment, and verbal abuse.
-  Hospitals were more likely to offer support (89.6%) than NFs (58.5%). The most common type of support offered by hospitals and NFs was counseling through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), 84.4% and 44.3%, respectively. Individual nurses stated that the most common type of support offered was peer support via qualified trained peers.

Table 1 shows the most used strategies and the strategies most frequently selected to be “most successful/effective” by employers and nurses.

Table 1: Most used and most successful/effective WPV Prevention or Reduction Strategy			
Individual Nurse Survey		Employer Survey	
Most Used Strategy (%)	Most Successful/Effective (%)	Most Used Strategy (%)	Most Successful/Effective (%)
Staff training (68.4%)	A multidisciplinary response team (61.6%)	Staff training (89.2%)	Staff training (49.3%)
Alarms (49.8%)	Chaperones (57.9%)	Investigation of reported incidents (81.3%)	Addressing physical security and safety (7.9%)
Restricted access (46.4%)	Availability of restraints and policies for use (56.5%)	Allowing staff to report incidents (75.2%)	System for responding to and investigating violent incidents (3.6%)

References





1. O'Brien CJ, Zundert AAJ van, Barach PR. The growing burden of workplace violence against healthcare workers: trends in prevalence, risk factors, consequences, and prevention – a narrative review. *eClinicalMedicine*. 2024;72. doi:10.1016/j.eclinm.2024.102641

2. National Nurses United. High and Rising Rates of Workplace Violence and Employer Failure to Implement Effective Prevention Strategies Is Contributing to the Staffing Crisis.; 2024:3.

3. Relating to Workplace Violence Prevention in Certain Health Facilities. <https://legiscan.com/TX/text/SB240/id/2797470>

Methods and Data

In Spring of 2024, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) disseminated two surveys: one to a sample of 6,524 nurses and one to 2,360 employers. The employer survey was sent to 739 hospitals, 1,186 nursing facilities (NFs), and 435 home health and hospice care (HHHCs) agencies. Data collected from employers included 1) policies for reporting and tracking incidents of WPV, 2) WPV prevention trainings offered, and 3) strategies used by their facility to decrease or prevent WPV. The data collected from individual nurses included 1) demographics, 2) frequency and type of WPV experienced in the past year and over the course of their careers, and 3) the strategies used by their employers to prevent or decrease WPV and 4) their perceived effectiveness.

-  558 (8.6%) valid individual survey responses were received. 75.2% of nurses reported experiencing at least one type of WPV in the past year and 87.9% over the course of their career.
-  The most common type of WPV experienced by nurses in the past 12 months and throughout the course of their careers was verbal abuse, (72.7% and 84.0%, respectively). Patients were the most frequent actor of WPV in the past 12 months and throughout the course of nurses’ career. Nurses 27 years of age or younger were more likely to experience WPV in the past 12 months (90.9%) than other age groups (62.5%-76.6%).
-  53.7% of nurses who experienced WPV reported the event to their employer. 55.1% of nurses who did not report the event chose not to report because they did not expect anything to change in the long-term.
-  72.7% of respondents ranked lack of respect for healthcare workers as a very impactful factor on WPV. Respondents were asked to select the factor they think is most impactful. The two most frequently selected factors were insufficient staffing and lack of respect for healthcare workers.

Conclusions and Implications

There is a high prevalence of WPV against nurses in Texas. Most nurses and employers reported that their facility uses at least one WPV prevention or reduction strategy. Compared to the 2022 employer survey results, 12.9% more employers offer follow-up support and staff training continues to be the most used WPV prevention strategy. In comparison to the 2016 individual nurse survey, the most common form of WPV continues to be verbal abuse and 32.6% more nurses reported their most recent WPV event to their employer.

Results suggest that the strategies to address WPV could better align with the approaches frontline nurses find most effective in addressing WPV. Future studies could compare the results of facilities that include frontline staff in their development of a WPV plan and those that do not.

Scan this QR code to access the full survey reports.

