

Caswell, Lynne

From: James Bailey <jrt.bailey@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 22, 2022 1:16 PM
To: Caswell, Lynne
Subject: Taskforce on assaults on healthcare workers

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Good Afternoon Ms. Caswell,

My name is James Bailey and I have been an employee of Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center for five years - however I am not speaking on behalf of the hospital or the Department. I am a licensed social worker and currently work as a Forensic Liaison, so I have frequent contact with courts, defense attorneys, district attorneys, and jails. I am also the president of the MSEA chapter that represents many staff at the hospital, including most nurses. Confidentiality prevents me from discussing any specific case, of course, but I'd still like to contribute the following information for the taskforce's benefit.

- The data provided by the state regarding incidents at both state hospitals specifies that it was gathered via worker's compensation data. While I don't have the numbers available, I would posit that injuries resulting in a claim represent a significant minority of assaults. I would encourage the task force and the state to work together to get a better sense of the data based off of incident reports rather than claims. I believe that a claim can only be made on injuries that result in a minimum of seven days missed work.

- Assaults committed at the hospital could broadly be categorized in two groups. The first is that a floridly psychotic ill patient commits an assault because they are delusional, hallucinating, and/or paranoid. The second is that a patient, who may be concurrently ill, plans an assault and commits it with malice or out of anger. Informally, we respond to these two groups differently. A concern that has been expressed is that the District Attorney's office may not appreciate the difference between these two groups and instead categorize assaults as mostly of the former, wherein prosecution may not result in meaningful consequences or public safety.

- The hospital and its staff wants what is healthiest and most appropriate for its patients; that is always our greatest value. And there does exist a risk that a patient being arrested and sent to jail could result in worsening mental illness. However, reinforcing to patients that are competent, sane, and in a normal condition of mind (legally speaking) that they can assault staff without repercussion is a much more dangerous risk.

Thank you for your time and attention to this and feel free to contact me at my personal email jrt.bailey@gmail.com

Sincerely,

James Bailey