



July 7, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy and Leader McConnell:

The past several years have been extremely difficult for front-line health care workers who have dealt with physical and emotional stress from COVID-19, burnout, threats, violence and staff shortages. Trinity Health calls on Congress to pass two important bills that will help build resilience for our health care workforce.

Workplace violence is a serious and growing problem in health care settings. In fact, 44% of nurses report experiencing physical violence since the COVID-19 pandemic began.<sup>1</sup> Trinity Health has employed a variety of strategies and tactics to combat escalating violence toward colleagues including de-escalation and workplace violence prevention training, tools for early identification of high risk of violence patients and behavioral emergency response teams. However, we need a public policy response to support and enhance these efforts.

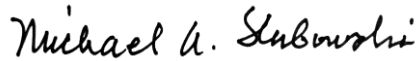
The bipartisan Safety from Violence for Healthcare Employees (SAVE) Act (H.R. 7961) would make it a federal crime to assault or intimidate a hospital employee if it interferes with the ability of that employee to perform their duties. The legislation is modeled after the federal statute protecting aircraft and airport workers. In addition, the bill would establish a federal grant program at the Department of Justice to augment hospital efforts to reduce violence by funding violence prevention training programs, enhancing coordination with state and local law enforcement, and providing for physical plant improvements, such as metal detectors and panic buttons. Trinity Health supports this legislation to help protect our colleagues and all health care workers.

Shortages across the health care workforce have required health systems to rely on expensive contract labor. Trinity Health has experienced a 20% increase in labor costs from pre-pandemic, with some nurse staffing agencies charging \$150-250/hour at the height of the Delta and Omicron surges. In addition to significantly higher wages, agencies often seek guaranteed overtime hours and unique credentialing requirements; this inequity creates tension and frustration among our valued, employed colleagues. Trinity Health has repeatedly called on Congress and the Biden Administration to investigate staffing agency practices during the pandemic.

The Travel Nursing Agency Transparency Study Act (S. 4352) would instruct the Government Accountability Office to study the dynamics and business practices of travel nurse staffing agencies during the pandemic, including potential price gouging and excessive profits, increased margins that agencies retain for themselves instead of providing the pay to nurses, impact of increased reliance on travel nurses in rural areas and how these practices contribute to workforce shortages across the country. Trinity Health supports this legislation as a way to prevent future price gouging.

Trinity Health encourages Congress to work together to quickly pass both important pieces of legislation that will protect and strengthen the health care workforce. Please contact me or Maggie Randolph, Director of Public Policy & Analysis, at [margaret.randolph@trinity-health.org](mailto:margaret.randolph@trinity-health.org) with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Slubowski". The script is cursive and fluid.

Michael A. Slubowski, FACHE, FACMPE  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Trinity Health

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<sup>1</sup> Byon HD, Sagherian K, Kim Y, Lipscomb J, Crandall M, Steege L. Nurses' Experience With Type II Workplace Violence and Underreporting During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Workplace Health Saf. 2021 Aug 3;21650799211031233.