

## THA Capstone Project: Reducing Workplace Violence in Texas Emergency Departments

**Team Members:** Kathy Griffis, Kyle Armstrong, Anil Sinha

### **Purpose:**

Develop a comprehensive plan to reduce violence against staff in Texas Hospital Emergency Departments by managing psychiatric emergencies in conjunction with compassionate, evidence-based patient care.

### **Statement of Need:**

Nationally violence against healthcare staff in hospital Emergency Departments is happening at an alarming rate and that includes violence with injury. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 1993 and 2009, healthcare workers had a 20 percent higher rate than others. Data reveals, per 10,000 employees, violence for all workers occurs at a rate of 2.1. For healthcare workers, that rate increases to 10.4, and for psychiatric/substance abuse patients the rate rises to an alarming 124.9 per 10,000. Furthermore, the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) report reveals that the rate of ED visits for mental health and substance abuse diagnoses increased 44.1 percent from 2006 to 2014, to a rate of 20.3 visits per 1,000 population (Karaca, 2017). This data highlights the need to create sustainable programs to reduce violence in Emergency Departments.

### **Considerations:**

Between 2016 and 2018, the State of Texas performed a study to assess practices and strategies used by hospitals to prevent workplace violence against nurses and found the following:

- 83% of nursing staff had experienced some type of workplace violence
- 50% of the nurses experienced physical violence
- 60% of the nurses did not report their most recent violent event
- Only 50% of the nurses felt their organizations were “very” or “extremely safe”
- A recommendation was made to foster a safe work environment in Emergency Departments by using evidenced-based practices to screen patients at risk for violent behaviors.

The HCUP study also found that mental and substance use disorders in Emergency Department visits cost \$5.6 billion dollars annually. Primary expected payer sources for these patients were Medicaid in 36 percent of the visits and self-pay/no charge in 15.7 percent.

### **Plan:**

- Create an evidence-based standardized tool kit for Texas hospitals that includes screening and comprehensive treatment protocols for patients suffering from psychiatric emergencies manifested in violent behaviors against healthcare workers in Emergency Departments.
- Recommend Texas Legislators consider funding telehealth medical consulting services to Emergency Departments to de-escalate violent behaviors through early, expert medical intervention thereby reducing harm.
- Encourage the Texas Legislature to expand Medicaid funding for psychiatric patient care.

### **Stakeholders:**

Texas medical facilities with Emergency Departments

Psychiatric facilities

Texas Hospital Association