



State of New Mexico
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR

For Immediate Release
November 8, 2017

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State Auditor Tim Keller Issues Risk Advisory on Violence Against Healthcare Workers
Violence against doctors, nurses in public hospitals is common and underreported

SANTA FE, NM – State Auditor Tim Keller issued a Risk Advisory on Violence Against Healthcare Workers to all public hospitals in New Mexico. Workplace violence occurs at high rates in public hospitals and many incidences go unreported. Violence against nurses, doctors and other staff can impact the financial health of government-run facilities in addition to posing a clear threat to safety.

“We’re concerned by the high rates of violence against nurses and doctors in our public hospitals,” stated State Auditor Tim Keller. “Violence poses a threat to the safety of our healthcare workers and is costly for our government-run institutions. We’ve advised all public hospitals across New Mexico to examine their violence prevention policies. Implementing a comprehensive prevention program is the right thing to do and makes good fiscal sense.”

The Risk Advisory highlights the following information:

- State government hospitals reported higher incidence rates of worker injury and illness compared to other healthcare facilities, at 8.1 cases per 100 full-time workers. Among those cases, the most common event leading to injuries was violence and other injuries, over half of which were classified as “intentional injuries by another person.”
- There are likely even higher rates of violence than the statistics show because incidences are underreported in hospitals due to compassion for patients.
- Injuries in the workplace have high financial costs from compensation claims or replacing staff. The estimated cost of replacing a nurse when they have left the job can be around \$100,000, accounting for recruiting, hiring, orientation and lost productivity.
- Workplace violence can be preventable with a comprehensive prevention program. The Risk Advisory highlights a roadmap for hospitals from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The Risk Advisory is available here:

https://www.saonm.org/media/uploads/Violence_Against_Healthcare_Workers.pdf

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