

CAPITOL OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
TEL 916 651-4019
FAX 916 651-4919

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY OFFICE
222 E. CARRILLO STREET
SUITE 309
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
TEL 805-965-0862
FAX 805-965-0701

VENTURA COUNTY OFFICE
300 E. ESPLANADE DRIVE
SUITE 430
OXNARD, CA 93036
TEL 805-988-1940
FAX 805-988-1945

California State Legislature

SENATOR
HANNAH-BETH JACKSON

NINETEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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LEGISLATIVE AUDIT

David Thomas, Board Chair
Occupational Safety & Health Standards Board
2520 Venture Oaks Way, Suite 350
Sacramento, California 95833

Dear Chairman Thomas and Members of the Board:

I am writing to support of the development of a new Workplace Violence Prevention Standard for Healthcare Workers. Healthcare workers are the most physically threatened workers in the nation, accounting for almost sixty percent of violent assaults in the workplace. I encourage the board to adopt a comprehensive standard on workplace violence that will help to change workplace practices and improve safety for workers in the healthcare industry, nearly 80 percent of whom are women.

- Women account for nearly 80 percent of the reported injuries and illnesses involving lost work-time in this industry
- About 90 percent of nurses are women and nurses are about 57 percent more likely to be assaulted than doctors, who are more than twice as likely to be male than female

Both OSHA and Cal/OSHA recognize workplace violence as a hazard. I support OSHA's mandate that employers "shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees" (29 USC 654, Section 5, "Duties"). While California has model workplace violence prevention legislation (AB 1083), it does not adequately protect healthcare workers from violence that occurs in their workplaces because enforcement of the law is outside of Cal/OSHA's jurisdiction, necessitating the need to promulgate new standards and enforcement procedures to address this critical problem.

Cal/OSHA has historically done what it could to go above and beyond federal OSH Act and, I believe that adoption of this Workplace Violence Prevention Standard for Health Care Workers

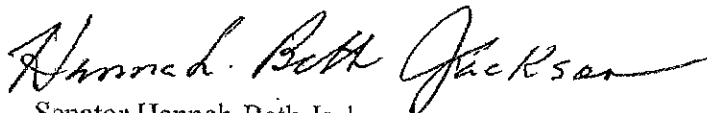
David Thomas, Board Chair

Page 2

April 3, 2014

will continue the progressive and proactive approach on behalf of workers that Cal/OSHA has maintained throughout the forty years of its existence.

Sincerely,


Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson