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September 23, 2013

Richard Negri, Health and Safety Director
Katherine Hughes, RN
SEIU Local 121RN
1040 Lincoln Avenue
Pasadena CA 91103

Dear Mr. Negri and Ms. Hughes,

On behalf of SEIU California's over 700,000 workers, I am writing in full support of the Workplace Violence Prevention Standard for Healthcare Workers, sponsored by SEIU Local 121RN and the SEIU Nurse Alliance of California.

Healthcare workers are the most assaulted workers in the nation, accounting for almost sixty percent of violent assaults in the workplace. We believe that a comprehensive standard on workplace violence will help to change the culture in the healthcare industry – a culture in which workplace violence is seen as “part of the job.”

Both OSHA and Cal/OSHA recognize workplace violence as a hazard. We affirm 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 causing or 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.

We know that Cal/OSHA has historically done what it could to go above and beyond the federal OSH Act and believe that adoption of this Workplace Violence Prevention Standard for Healthcare Workers will continue the progressive and proactive approach on behalf of workers that Cal/OSHA has maintained throughout the forty years of its existence.

Sincerely,

Jon Youngdahl
Executive Director