

RCW 72.23.400 Workplace safety plan. (1) By November 1, 2000, each state hospital shall develop a plan, for implementation by January 1, 2001, to reasonably prevent and protect employees from violence at the state hospital. The plan shall be developed with input from the state hospital's safety committee, which includes representation from management, unions, nursing, psychiatry, and key function staff as appropriate. The plan shall address security considerations related to the following items, as appropriate to the particular state hospital, based upon the hazards identified in the assessment required under subsection (2) of this section:

- (a) The physical attributes of the state hospital including access control, egress control, door locks, lighting, and alarm systems;
- (b) Staffing, including security staffing;
- (c) Personnel policies;
- (d) First aid and emergency procedures;
- (e) Reporting violent acts, taking appropriate action in response to violent acts, and follow-up procedures after violent acts;
- (f) Development of criteria for determining and reporting verbal threats;
- (g) Employee education and training; and
- (h) Clinical and patient policies and procedures including those related to smoking; activity, leisure, and therapeutic programs; communication between shifts; and restraint and seclusion.

(2) Before the development of the plan required under subsection (1) of this section, each state hospital shall conduct a security and safety assessment to identify existing or potential hazards for violence and determine the appropriate preventive action to be taken. The assessment shall include, but is not limited to analysis of data on violence and worker's compensation claims during at least the preceding year, input from staff and patients such as surveys, and information relevant to subsection (1)(a) through (h) of this section.

(3) In developing the plan required by subsection (1) of this section, the state hospital may consider any guidelines on violence in the workplace or in the state hospital issued by the department of health, the department of social and health services, the department of labor and industries, the federal occupational safety and health administration, medicare, and state hospital accrediting organizations.

(4) The plan must be evaluated, reviewed, and amended as necessary, at least annually. [2000 c 22 § 3.]

Findings—2000 c 22: "The legislature finds that:

- (1) Workplace safety is of paramount importance in state hospitals for patients and the staff that treat them;
- (2) Based on an analysis of workers' compensation claims, the department of labor and industries reports that state hospital employees face high rates of workplace violence in Washington state;
- (3) State hospital violence is often related to the nature of the patients served, people who are both mentally ill and too dangerous for treatment in their home community, and people whose behavior is driven by elements of mental illness including desperation, confusion, delusion, or hallucination;
- (4) Patients and employees should be assured a reasonably safe and secure environment in state hospitals;

(5) The state hospitals have undertaken efforts to assure that patients and employees are safe from violence, but additional personnel training and appropriate safeguards may be needed to prevent workplace violence and minimize the risk and dangers affecting people in state hospitals; and

(6) Duplication and redundancy should be avoided so as to maximize resources available for patient care." [2000 c 22 § 1.]