

U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for
Occupational Safety and Health
Washington, D.C. 20210



JAN - 3 2017

The Honorable Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Scott:

Thank you for your July 18, 2016 letter to Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez supporting petitions that urge Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to promulgate an OSHA workplace violence standard to protect workers in healthcare and social services assistance. We welcome your interest in the safety and health of America's workers in general, and, more specifically, in protecting healthcare and social assistance workers against violence.

I agree with you that workplace violence is a serious occupational hazard that presents a significant risk for healthcare and social assistance workers. Evidence indicates that the rate of workplace violence in the healthcare and social assistance sector is substantially higher than private industry as a whole and that the healthcare and social assistance sector is growing. In response to this problem, OSHA has used the General Duty Clause in cases involving employers that expose their workers to this recognized hazard in a growing number of workplaces. OSHA has also revised its guidance on preventing workplace violence for healthcare and social service workers, and has conducted its first comprehensive workplace violence training for its Compliance Officers.

In addition to these measures, I believe that a standard protecting healthcare and social assistance workers against workplace violence is necessary. OSHA is granting your petition and will commence rulemaking to address the hazards of workplace violence in the healthcare and social assistance industries. In order to gather additional information to assist in developing a proposed standard on workplace violence, OSHA has published a Request for Information (RFI), which can be found here: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=OSHA-2016-0014-0001>. The comment period closes April 6, 2017. In addition, OSHA will obtain information at a stakeholder meeting on January 10, 2017. OSHA will use the information it collects as it moves forward through the steps required to adopt a standard. I look forward to your continued involvement with this issue.

Thank you for your interest in occupational safety and health and in this important topic of workplace violence in healthcare. If we can be of further assistance to you, please contact Department of Labor's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 693-4600.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Michaels', written in a cursive style.

David Michaels, PhD, MPH

cc: The Honorable Frederica S. Wilson
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate

The Honorable Al Franken
United States Senate

The Honorable Joe Courtney
U. S. House of Representatives