

Senate Human Services Committee
Senator Lee, Chair
Testimony in Support of HB 1341
Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Lee, Vice Chairmen Weston, and Members of the Senate Human Committee. My name is Kylie Vining, and I am the Director of Legislation and Education for the Nursing Student Association of North Dakota. I have been a CNA since 2021, a phlebotomist since 2023, and am currently a nursing student on track to graduate in May of 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of HB 1341.

In the 4 years I have spent in healthcare, I have been unfortunate to experience violence towards myself, fellow CNA's, nurses, and countless other healthcare workers. Combined with the many stories I have heard from healthcare workers about their own traumatic experiences with patients and the physical scars they left behind has made me question many times whether healthcare is a field I want to risk my safety and mental health for.

Many of the stories I have to share involve patients slapping, punching, kicking, biting, spitting, and even trapping myself or other staff. One morning while working as a phlebotomist, I was training a new hire, and we entered a patients room to draw their labs. After asking permission to do so, the patient became severely agitated and began not only threatening to hit us but also started kicking their legs. They slapped my arm when I reached to remove possible weapons from their reach, swore, and threatened all staff around. All of this over the simple question of "Can we draw your blood for labs?"

On another occasion in the same hospital, I was paged to draw stat labs. Upon arriving to the patients room, I once again, simply asked if I could draw labs and after the patient gave me permission to do so, I explained I was putting a tourniquet on their arm, that it would be tight, and that it was not to harm them but to help me do my job more effectively. They voiced they understood, however, once I turned to get the rest of my supplies needed, they ripped the tourniquet off, threw it across the room, and began screaming insults at myself and other staff rushing into the room after hearing the yelling. They threw the call light across the room, just barely missing the nurse, and attempted to grab other objects to throw. After leaving the room, the nurses informed me this patient had punched one of them earlier and had tried to attack another.

Sadly, I have many stories that all end the same: nothing was done to reprimand the patient behind the behaviors. As a future nurse, my job description will be lengthy and hold much responsibility, but being assaulted and abused is not and should not be one of them. Personally, I do not want to enter a career where I simply have to forget about the abuse and trauma I go through and are overlooked because it's "part of my job description". This is a stigma and belief that should not be expected of nurses nor any other healthcare provider in the state of North Dakota.

As Director of Legislation and Education, it is my job to not only inform the nursing students of North Dakota of important legislative issues that can impact them, but to also represent them and be a voice for their concerns and fears. I can confidently say for the nursing students of North Dakota that this bill is vital to protecting our futures as nurses and the care we strive to provide to our present and future patients.

I ask of you to set a standard of behavior and respect expected of patients to protect my fellow nursing students and future colleagues by voting YES to HB 1341. Thank you for your time and your dedication to the state of North Dakota.

Please contact me with any questions or other concerns!

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