

PROPOSED MICHIGAN LEGISLATION EXPANDS PROTECTIONS TO HEALTH CARE WORKERS

On January 18, 2017, **Senate Bill 33** ("SB 33") was introduced in the Michigan Senate by Senator Kenneth Horn (R – Frankenmuth). SB 33 would amend the Michigan penal code by imposing felony charges against any individual who assaults, batters, wounds, resists, obstructs, opposes or endangers emergency room personnel performing their duties.

The current law in Michigan provides protection to police officers, firefighters, paramedics, EMTs and other first responders. SB 33 would extend that protection to emergency room personnel including, but not limited to, physicians, nurses, intake clerks and any other individual employed in the emergency department, emergency room, operating room or trauma center of a hospital. The penalties imposed by the law increase based on the amount of harm suffered by the victim.

This legislation represents a growing trend in states protecting health care workers from violence that may occur in the workplace. However, the need for additional legal protections for health care workers is not a new concept. The FBI and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have previously reported that more assaults occur in the health care and social services industries than in any other.¹

If passed by the Michigan legislature, SB 33 would provide another deterrent and tool that could be utilized by Michigan hospitals to help ensure a safer workplace for employees. SB 33 has been referred to the Committee on Judiciary. Hall Render will continue to monitor SB 33 and provide timely updates on its status.

If you have any questions on SB 33 or related issues, please contact:

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- Brad Taormina at (248) 457-7895 or btaormina@hallrender.com; or
- Your regular Hall Render attorney.

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¹ Rugala EA, Isaacs AR, eds. Workplace violence: issues in response. Quantico, VA: Critical Incident Response Group, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, FBI Academy, 2003 (<https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/workplace-violence>).