

# Addressing Assault of Healthcare Workers with Bodily Fluids (TX SB 2792)



In the 88th Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature passed SB 840 to increase the penalty of assaulting a healthcare worker in hospital from a misdemeanor to a felony.

In the interim, the Texas Nurses Association learned the law did not extend the enhanced penalty to assault with bodily fluids.

Texas nurses are asking you to support SB 2792 to extend enhanced penalties to assault with bodily fluids.

Exposure to bodily fluids can transmit infectious diseases such as Hepatitis B and C and HIV. There is a high risk that victims of assault with bodily fluids will be subjected to extensive medical testing, treatments, and emotional distress. Post-exposure prophylaxis, medication used to prevent disease after exposure, also presents risk of harm to the affected healthcare worker as the medication can cause side effects including liver damage. For pregnant healthcare workers, there are possible risks to the unborn fetus when taking these medications to prevent transmission.

When healthcare workers are subjected to assaults it may lead to increased absenteeism, burnout, a decline in workplace morale, and attrition.

The Texas Legislature can help protect healthcare workers by increasing the penalty for assault with bodily fluids to mirror the enhanced penalty for physical assault in Texas hospitals.

