

The Vermont Medical Society, American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter and Vermont Academy of Family Physicians ask that you support Vermont hospitals and health care workers and vote yes on S.30.

Vermont must do more to mitigate risk to our health care professionals and patients. Hospitals are inherently emotionally charged environments and staff face verbal threats and physical assaults from patients and visitors. Our health care professionals are at a high risk for injury. In fact, in his testimony to you on January 29th, Dr. Ryan Sexton, M.D., Vice President of the Vermont Medical Society, and Emergency Room Physician at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital stated, “there are many incidences that could have ended differently if a firearm had been present”

In her testimony on February 24th, Dr. Rebecca Bell, M.D., President of the American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter, and Pediatric Intensive Care Physician at UVMMC spoke to you about acts of violence are not a forgone conclusion, we are all human and are all capable of violence. She reminded us that the idea is to keep people safe in times when violence is more likely to happen, stating that If you have a situation where someone faces an unexpected event, emotions are heightened and access to a firearm can lead to a violent act that leads to preventable tragedy.

“I meet people on the very worst days of their life. I have been verbally threatened in situations where parents are losing a child – I have had parents say to me, do not stop CPR, if my child dies I will kill you. When this happens, these are not bad people. They did not wake up in the morning or enter the hospital thinking they were going to threaten someone. This is coming from an unimaginable place of pain, anguish and suffering. What we want is for that environment to be as safe as possible knowing that people will get news that they never imagined they would get and we don’t know how they will react - THEY do not know how they will react - We do not know how WE would react - because we are human. Instead of thinking of a person as being with malintent - it is all of us being human.”

The health care setting is a challenging and unpredictable environment. Vermont is fortunate to not have had recent incidence of firearm violence in hospitals, but we remain at risk. Vermont’s health care professionals believe that S.30 will protect patients and health care professionals.

We urge you to vote yes on S.30 and support improving safety in our hospitals across the state.

Stephanie

Stephanie Winters

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Executive Director, Vermont Orthopaedic Society

Executive Director, Vermont Psychiatric Association

Executive Director, Vermont Society of Anesthesiologists

Executive Director, Vermont State Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons

