

The Vermont Medical Society (VMS), American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter (AAPVT) and the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians echo the sentiments from Devon (VAHHS). We support S. 30 as it passed the House and support its quick passage in the Senate.

As VMS President-Elect and Emergency Room Physician at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital Dr. Ryan Sexton stated in his testimony in the House Judiciary Committee just a few weeks ago, "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, there are many incidences that could have ended differently if a firearm had been present".

And Dr. Rebecca Bell, AAPVT Chapter President and Pediatric Intensive Care Physician at UVMMC came before you on this bill last year stating that acts of violence are not a forgone conclusion. "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.

Thank you for your support of this bill.