

# Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

*Kevin Condict 271-7875*

**SB 29**, relative to membership, jurisdiction, and reports of the health care workplace safety commission and relative to health care facility reporting requirements under the workplace violence prevention program.

**Hearing Date:** January 15, 2025

**Time Opened:** 10:33 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 10:43 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Pearl, McGough, Gannon, Altschiller and Reardon

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill adds a representative of Hampstead hospital to the health care workplace safety commission, requires monthly reporting of incidents to the department of labor, repeals an exemption for state operated health care facilities from jurisdiction of the commission, and clarifies that annual reports of the commission are not confidential. The bill is a request of the health care workplace safety commission.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Reardon

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Avarad

Sen. Gray

Sen. Ricciardi

Rep. W. MacDonald

Rep. Palmer

Rep. B. Sullivan

Rep. MacKenzie

Rep. Weber

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator Cindy Rosenwald (SD13), Jonathan Melandon (NH Nurses Assoc.), Ben Bradley (NH Hospital Assoc.), Senator James Gray (SD5), Senator Donovan Fenton (SD10), and Pamela DiNapoli.

**Who opposes the bill:** Julie Smith and Curtis Howland.

**Who is neutral on the bill:** None.

**Summary of testimony presented:**

**Senator Cindy Rosenwald, Senate District 13**

- Senator Rosenwald introduced Senate Bill 29.

- Sen. Rosenwald explained this bill implements several recommendations of the first annual report of the Workplace Safety Commission. The Commission was created by Sen. Gray and former Sen. Sherman in response to an increase in healthcare workplace violence. Sen. Rosenwald explained that all New Hampshire hospitals have been participating except Hampstead.
- Sen. Rosenwald said the first report of the Commission indicates almost three thousand incidences of violence in hospitals. Of those, thirty-three resulted in serious injuries.
- Sen. Rosenwald said the recommendations of the Commission this bill seeks to implement are adding Hampstead Hospital to the commission and requiring New Hampshire Hospital and Hampstead Hospital to report incidents like all other hospitals monthly. She said that internal reporting is confidential but the report with aggregated data is not.
- Sen. Rosenwald said the Commission's first report was distributed to a limited number of people in the legislature. She said it is the like the adverse incidents occurring in hospitals commission whose work is confidential.
- Sen. Rosenwald said the health care workforce is essential and the State must do a better job to protect them from workplace violence.
- Sen. Pearl asked of Sen. Rosenwald feels like these instances of violence are underreported.
  - o Sen. Rosenwald said she does not know. She said violence comes from patients to staff and from staff to staff. She said there may be some underreporting. She said we need to know more about it. She said reported instances of workplace violence are rising.

### **Ben Bradley, New Hampshire Hospital Association**

- Mr. Bradley said the New Hampshire Hospital Association (NHHA) is grateful for the work involved to help support these interests.
- Mr. Bradley noted there have been changes to the Commission. He said the NHHA fully supports the Commission's recommendations.
- Sen. Pearl asked if the NHHA feels instances of violence are currently underreported.
  - o Mr. Bradley said he has worked at a hospital before and has participated in talks. He said he feels they are underreported. He said the Commission is not just made up of designees but a wide variety of stakeholders from each hospital. He said that historically incidences of violence have been underreporting.
- Sen. Pearl asked about the monthly reporting. He asked if Mr. Bradley feels that is an obligation hospitals can meet.
  - o Mr. Bradley said it is his understanding they are already doing so. He said part of the Commission's work is to create workplace violence prevention programs.
- Sen. Altschiller noted that before the Commission was established in 2023, its creation was precipitated by hospital incidents. She asked if he has been

hearing from hospitals that they have been using their own gathered data to increase safety provisions.

- Mr. Bradley said that he has, and that it is an important issue for member hospitals. He said hospitals' human resources department have a collaborative team that comes together to find and report incidences. He said there are ongoing conversations.

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Date Hearing Report completed: January 21, 2025