HOSPITAL STABBINGS DEMONSTRATE INCREASED VIOLENCE AGAINST NURSES

Two Los Angeles area nurses are stabbed the same morning at different hospitals by different attackers

"We cannot stand by while nurses, other hospital staff, patients, families and visitors are put in harm’s way in hospitals that fail to provide the measures that will protect their staff and the community."

- Malinda Markowitz, President of the California Nurses Association

For a free copy of our Root Cause Analysis Template in Microsoft Excel, used to create this page, visit our web site.

**Basic Cause Map**

- **Problem(s)**: Nurse stabbed; critical condition
- **Date**: April 20, 2014
- **Time**: Just after 2:00 AM

**Cause Map**

Cause Mapping is a Root Cause Analysis method that captures basic cause-and-effect relationships supported with evidence.

**Problem**

What's the Problem? Why did it happen? What will be done?

**Analysis**

Why did it happen? What will be done?

**Solutions**

What will be done?

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**More Detailed Cause Map**

- **Possible solutions**: Establishment of workplace violence plans
  - Difficulty in recognizing potential for violence
  - Increased violence in hospitals

- **Possible solution**: Use of mobile distress system
  - Response time
  - Evidence

- **Possible solution**: Establishment of workplace violence plans

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**Basic Level Cause Map** - Start with simple Why questions.

- **Employee Safety Goal Impacted**: Nurse seriously injured
- **Person Encountered**: Violent attacker

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**Analysis**

Nurses and other hospital personnel have noted the difficulty in determining the potential for an escalation of violence in patients and other visitors. According to the President of the Emergency Nurses Association, Deena Brecher, R.N., “You need to be able to recognize when things are starting to escalate. We know our behaviors can help escalate a situation, not intentionally.”

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**Solutions**

Many nurses are calling for establishment of workplace violence plans that would provide nurses and other hospital workers tools to identify and de-escalate potentially violent behavior, as well as provide additional protections against these types of attacks. Some hospitals have begun using a mobile distress system, such as a help button worn around the neck that allows a worker to request backup in a situation that feels unsafe.

These solutions bring up an interesting discussion against prevention and blame. The solutions listed above all require action by the part of nurses or hospital workers. Many organizations attempt to determine the person to "blame" for a situation, and then assign corrective actions accordingly. Clearly, nobody is trying to imply that hospital workers are at fault for these violent attacks (blame) but are rather trying to provide tools within their sphere of control to reduce the risk of worker injury (prevention). Preventing all people prone to violence from entering a hospital, while theoretically more effective at solving the problem, is neither practical nor possible. Thus it is hoped that providing hospital workers additional tools will result in reduced injuries from hospital violence.

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**Impact to the Goals**

- **Patient Safety**: None; potential for injury
- **Employee Safety**: Nurse seriously injured
- **Environmental**: None
- **Compliance**: ?
- **Patient Services**: Attacker bypassed weapons screening area
- **Frequency**: Another stabbing in county occurred later that morning (believed unrelated)

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**Problem Solving • Incident Investigation • Root Cause Analysis**

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**Cause Mapping**

Investigate Problems. Prevent Problems.

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**Cause Mapping**

- **Step 1**: Problem
  - What's the Problem? Why did it happen? What will be done?

- **Step 2**: Analysis
  - Why did it happen? What will be done?

- **Step 3**: Solutions
  - What will be done?