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**Georgia Hospital Association, Georgia Nurses Association  
Co-Host Workforce Violence Prevention Summit**

**ATLANTA, Ga. (Feb. 14, 2024)** — The Georgia Hospital Association (GHA) and the Georgia Nurses Association (GNA) held the first annual Workforce Violence Prevention Summit at the Georgia State Capitol on Monday. The goal of the summit was to help devise solutions to the workforce violence challenges facing the state and to foster productive collaboration and conversations among hospital and healthcare leaders, legislators, state leaders, law enforcement, and other stakeholders.

Rep. Matt Reeves attended and provided an overview of the Safer Hospitals Act (H.B. 383), which increased penalties for assault and battery against a healthcare worker. The bill, which was sponsored by Rep. Reeves, also paved the way for hospitals to employ their own POST-certified (Georgia Peace Officers Standards and Training Council) public safety officers. Participants also discussed factors that may contribute to whether victims report instances of violence, law enforcement response, and measures that may help support prosecution efforts.

“Our healthcare workers remain committed to providing quality care to those who depend on us,” said **Mary Chatman, GHA board chair and executive vice president of acute care operations for Wellstar Health System**. “Violence is not acceptable and healthcare workers should not have to worry about being attacked. Understanding the prevalence of violence and the circumstances surrounding these incidents is important. We owe it to our workforce to partner together to address these issues, and we are proud to be part of efforts to find solutions to this problem.”

According to a recent Press Ganey Survey Report, 1 in 4 nurses have been assaulted, but only 20% to 60% of incidents are reported. Every hour, two nurses in the acute care setting are assaulted. This equates to roughly 57 assaults per day, 1,739 assaults per month, and 5,217 assaults per quarter. Additionally, workforce violence incidents increased 60% from 2011 to 2018.

“Workplace violence against nurses and healthcare workers has increased dramatically, which is unacceptable. Nurses and all healthcare professionals deserve to practice in safe environments without fear of being assaulted or verbally abused,” said **Matt Caseman, CEO of the Georgia Nurses Association**. “Georgia, like other states, faces a nursing shortage, and we must come together now to find solutions for ending healthcare workplace violence. If we don’t act, then our best and brightest will continue to leave or choose other careers, and patients will suffer. The

Georgia Nurses Association looks forward to working with the Georgia Hospital Association on this critical issue."

GHA and GNA will continue to partner on initiatives to eliminate healthcare workforce violence to ensure the state's healthcare workforce feels safe and secure.

"GHA is focused on convening meaningful conversations that address our toughest healthcare challenges and advance the priorities and sustainability of our hospital members and the Georgians they serve," continued **Chatman**. "We appreciate our partners, including the Georgia Nurses Association, the Georgia Health Care Association, Prosecuting Attorneys' Council, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Department of Community Health, Grady Hospital, Hamilton Health Care System, Stephens County Hospital, and others for joining us today to discuss this issue with the goal of protecting our existing workforce while recruiting additional talent into the healthcare field with the confidence of knowing we've all got their backs. They care for all of us when needed, and we are proud to stand up for them."

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Founded in 1929, GHA serves nearly 150 hospitals in Georgia and promotes the health and welfare of the public through the development of better hospital care for all Georgia's citizens. The mission of GHA is to advance the health of individuals and communities by serving as the leading advocate for all Georgia hospitals and health care systems. GHA represents its members before the General Assembly and Congress, as well as state and federal regulatory agencies, and is an allied member of the American Hospital Association. For more information, please call 770-249-4500 or visit [gha.org](http://gha.org).