



January 28, 2019

Councilman Vincent Gray  
Chairperson of Committee on Health  
District of Columbia Council  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite #402  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilman Gray:

As you are aware, the District of Columbia Nurses Association (DCNA) represents over 200 nurses at Department of Behavioral Health.

DCNA once again is compelled to notify you regarding our grave concerns regarding the violence against the staff at St. Elizabeths Hospital. Numerous patient attacks and assaults against our members have resulted in serious injuries and DCNA and our members believe that proper safety measure could have averted the incidents. St. Elizabeths has very volatile patients with criminal history, some of which include homicide. Please see attached a picture of a nurse whom a patient recently attacked. The patient severely beat the nurse, resulting in broken ribs and several peri-orbital injuries at the hand. This assault has added to the already high anxiety levels of our members.

Many nurses worry that they might be the next victim and might not be able to make it home to their families. No one should have to fear their lives when going to work. We encourage you to look at the attached picture and consider the impact that it might have on you if you had to fear leaving work with these injuries.

We are aware that there may be certain expectation of violence in psychiatric nursing; however, the severity and frequency of the attacks at St. Elizabeths concerns DCNA. DCNA has brought safety issues before St. Elizabeths during monthly labor-management meetings. The nurses need more support to ensure a safe environment which should include more support staff, security officers, better equipment and improved code responses.

DCNA requests a meeting to discuss our concerns of safety. Please contact Staff Attorney Wala Blegay to schedule a meeting and for additional questions at 202-244-2705 or [wblegay@dcna.org](mailto:wblegay@dcna.org). Thanks

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tinuolu, Shokunbi, RN". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Tinuolu, Shokunbi, RN  
DCNA/DBH President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Nelson, RN". The signature is cursive and clearly legible.

Susan Nelson, RN  
DCNA/DBH Vice President

