

March 20, 2024

The Honorable Tim Kaine
U.S. Senate
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
U.S. Senate
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Kaine and Young:

On behalf of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) and our nearly 50,000 members, I am writing to express our support for S. 3679, the *Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Reauthorization Act of 2024*, which would continue an important program to help combat burnout and suicide among health care providers, including emergency nurses.


As you know, suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, currently ranking tenth among known causes, having claimed more than 48,000 lives in 2021 alone. Among health care workers, including emergency nurses, risk factors for burnout and suicide are compounded by the working conditions faced daily by emergency nurses. High levels of workplace violence, long hours, inadequate staffing and overcrowded emergency rooms put tremendous pressure on these providers. The impacts of these conditions are serious. Many have left the profession, while others suffer from mental health conditions.

Moreover, health care professionals, including emergency nurses, often feel stigmatized or that their professional future will be at risk if they seek assistance for mental health issues. Beyond the immediate effect on the provider and their family, this reluctance to seek treatment will negatively impact the quality of care received by patients. More can and should be done to promote the mental and behavioral well-being of health care workers risking their lives to care for their communities. By fully supporting these professionals, we allow them to better serve their patients and their communities.

The *Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Reauthorization Act* provides grants to raise awareness and provide training for health care professionals in evidence-based strategies to reduce burnout and suicide, as well as to support mental and behavioral health treatment. The program also includes provisions to examine the broader issue of behavioral health issues among health care workers so we can better understand the root causes of this crisis. We applaud your efforts to enact these programs in 2022 and for taking proactive steps to continue this support the mental wellness of health care workers.

As professionals on the frontlines of our nation's health care system, emergency nurses are critical to providing emergency care to millions of Americans. We must continue to address their mental health needs throughout their careers. We would like to thank you for your leadership on this important legislation. If you have any questions, please contact ENA's Director of Government Relations, Rob Kramer, at 202-465-4756.

Sincerely,



Chris Dellinger, MBA, BSN, RN, FAEN
2024 ENA President