MAKING VICTORIAN HOSPITALS SAFER FOR HEALTH WORKERS

Frontline workers at 16 Victorian hospitals will be safer at work with the rollout of behavioural assessment rooms in emergency departments as part of the Andrews Labor Government’s $40 million plan to prevent violence and aggression towards the health workforce.

This forms part of the Labor Government’s campaign against occupational violence to remind the community, health workers and paramedics that violence and aggression are not tolerated or accepted as “part of the job”.

It is estimated that up to 95 per cent of healthcare workers have experienced physical attacks or verbal attacks while simply doing their job caring for others and saving lives.

Behavioural assessment rooms are separate areas purpose built for staff to better assess and manage patients who present to emergency departments exhibiting behaviours of concern, and who may place themselves, staff or others at risk of harm.

The funding – delivered as part of the Government’s $40 million Health Service Violence Prevention Fund – will enable public health services to start work on upgrading existing behaviour assessment rooms, or build new ones.

In June, the Government announced funding for a further five behavioural assessment rooms as well as providing a boost to security personnel at hospitals with emergency departments.

This coincided with the start of the “It’s never OK” campaign designed to reduce occupational violence and aggression against health workers.

The first two rounds of funding from the Fund have seen more than 60 health services receive funding for a range of projects such as installing alarms, CCTV, access control doors, lighting and security systems as well as redesigning waiting areas and trialling new equipment such as body-worn cameras for paramedics.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

“Our healthcare workers deserve to feel and be safe at work. That’s why we’re doing everything we can to support those who care for and save the lives of Victorians.”

“Behavioural assessment rooms will help keep our staff safe and send a message to Victorians that violence against healthcare workers is never OK.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley

“We’re working to ensure we provide secure and safe services for patients and staff alike.”

“We have zero tolerance for violence and aggression against our mental health workers – who care for Victorians at their most vulnerable and deserve our respect.”