

Heightened Vigilance at MLK Jr. Community Healthcare

MLK Jr. Community Healthcare in Los Angeles, Calif., has the second busiest emergency department in Los Angeles County. The department serves more than 90,000 patients a year, although it was designed for a maximum of 30,000. The resource-stretched staff also cares for a high number of patients with behavioral health and/or substance use disorders, or who are homeless — all factors that can contribute to violence.

Since implementing its workplace violence prevention program, MLK Jr. Community Healthcare staff saw a significant reduction in workplace violence, with violent incidents shrinking by 34% the first year of the program and by 17% the second year.

Executive leadership spearheaded the hospital's workplace violence prevention committee, which thoroughly analyzed worksite hazards, implemented control measures and de-escalation training across all departments, and documented incidents to identify and analyze trends.

The organization trains every employee annually to tackle workplace violence by increasing awareness, vigilance, interpersonal communications, self-defense and stress management, among other topics. It dedicates additional resources to educate staff who work in high-risk departments. To stay up to date, the hospital also partners with local law enforcement, federal support associations and the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety.

As a result, employees are prepared and effective.

"Staff are more aware of the key indicators for aggression," said Mark Reed, director of support services at MLK Jr. Community Healthcare. "Because our staff can identify early warning signs, we can de-escalate aggression before it turns to violence."



MLK Jr. Command Center

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