



memo:

TO: Executive Board, Council Leaders, Agency Labor-Management & Health & Safety Chairs

DATE: August 22, 2005

SUBJ: Statewide Campaign to **Stop Workplace Violence!**

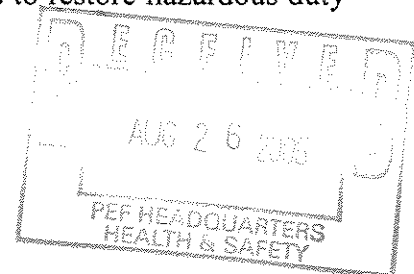
We are pleased to announce the initiation of a statewide campaign entitled, “**Stop Workplace Violence.**” Getting punched, kicked, or otherwise abused **is NOT** part of the job! Thousands of our members work with society’s most dangerous populations in hazardous conditions in the state institutions and social service agencies. Chronic short staffing, mandatory overtime, and stress put our members and their clients at risk. It is time to educate, agitate, and mobilize to improve safety! The goals of the campaign are:

1. Build a Hazardous Duty Pay Pushback;
2. Mobilize for Worksite and Agency Based Violence Prevention Programs; and
3. Establish a legislative agenda on hazardous duty pay and workplace violence prevention.

A sub-committee has been established including representatives from OMH, OMRDD, OASAS, OCFS, ENCON, Parole and SUNY. Vice President Pat Baker and Statewide Health & Safety Chair Rocco Brindisi will co-chair the sub-committee with staff support from Jonathan Rosen. Staff from PEF’s Occupational Safety & Health, Mobilization, Field Services, Research, Legislative, and Public Relations Departments will also assist in the campaign.

Key components of the campaign will include:

- Educating and mobilizing leaders and members to push back on the erosion of hazardous duty pay.
- Gathering data, surveying members, and documenting hazardous conditions.
- Implementing worksite violence prevention programs.
- Development of administrative and legislative remedies to restore hazardous duty pay to effected workers and reduce workplace violence.
- Expand programs to support injured members.

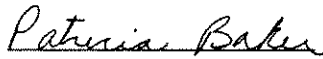


The subcommittee will be meeting in September and presenting a plan of action to the Agency Labor-Management and Health & Safety Committee Chairs in October. A major feature of the campaign will be a one day training program, held regionally, that will educate and mobilize local leaders and activists to carry out the campaign and achieve our goals.

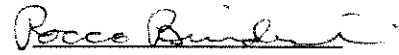
This campaign will be funded by our Membership Benefits Program and we extend our appreciation to the MBP Trustees for their support. Significant additional information will be forthcoming this fall.



Roger E. Benson
President



Pat Baker, Vice President
L-M Coordinator



Rocco Brindisi, Chair
S/W Health & Safety

cc: Statewide Health & Safety Committee
PEF Staff

PEF Factsheet...



Stop Workplace Violence

- In 2003/2004 twenty-nine percent of all workers' compensation cases for state employees (5,132) were categorized as "Patient or Inmate Assault" and "Struck by Object or Individual".
- In the NYS Office of Mental Health in 2003, the number of injuries due to patient assault and restraining patients was 1,882 and 1,241 for a combined total of 3,123 incidents. These accounted for 52.1% of all occupational injuries in OMH. These cases resulted in more than 8,000 lost work days.
- On January 2005 a female PEF Corrections Counselor was brutally attacked by an inmate at Elmira Correctional Facility. The inmate was serving 25-50 years for attempted murder and rape. The Corrections Officer who saved her life noticed the door to her office was closed and the lights were off.
- In November 2004 a female PEF Speech Language Pathologist was sexually assaulted by a mentally retarded client in an intensive treatment program at Taconic DDSO. The client had recently been transferred to the facility through the court system and had a history of assault. The PEF member screamed for her life for 15 minutes before she was rescued by a cleaner.
- The Community Psychiatric Emergency Program (CPEP) at SUNY Stonybrook's Health Science Center has been the site of several career ending assaults upon PEF nurses. In one of the most severe cases, the police had brought the assailant in handcuffs into CPEP at 1:30 am on a Saturday night. He attacked the PEF nurse in the nurses' station, causing broken ligaments in her hand, a back injury, and severe trauma. Within an hour after the assault the patient, who was on illegal drugs, died.
- In the above cases, the effected PEF members suffered severe psychological trauma as well as physical injuries. In most cases, family members are also traumatized as they fear for the well being of a loved one, and worry about their safety at work. Too many members are unable to continue working and as a result of these assaults.

What is to be done?

At the worksite...

Meet with management through labor/ management, health and safety, or environment of care committees. Establish a workgroup, task force, or project improvement team to develop a comprehensive assessment of the risk of workplace violence at the worksite. Look at injury data, hold focus groups of workers, survey the workforce, evaluate the work environment, and take action to prevent violence.

Within the PEF Division...

Form a PEF Committee that meets regularly to develop the local campaign.

Advocate with legislators and get the Governor to sign the bill....

1. S.5773 Spano/A.8940 John, applies to public employers including the state, local governments, public authorities and public benefit corporations that have 20 or more employees. The bill would require these employers to assess their worksites for potential areas of violence, notify employees of potential threats and work with employees and employee organizations to develop corrective action. It recently passed both houses.
2. S.207 Maziarz/ A.2570 Hoyt, Judi Scanlon bill. Requirements to protect mental health workers doing home visits and field work.
3. S.1387 Volker and A.3290 DelMonte amends the penal law to increase the penalty for an assault against public employees in the performance of their duties to a class D felony.



Jill Dangler, RN was brutally beaten by a patient at a state psychiatric hospital.

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