



Minister for Health and
Minister for Ambulance Services
Member for Woodridge

8 MAR 2016

Mr Neil Laurie
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Queensland Parliamentary Service
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Dear Mr Laurie *Neil,*

I write in response to your letter regarding petition number 2500-15, tabled in Parliament on 17 February 2016, in relation to the risk of assault faced by health staff within the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service.

Violence towards healthcare staff is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Following an increase in the number of verbal and physical assaults against front-line workers, including paramedics, the Palaszczuk Government has taken a firm stance regarding violence or assault towards staff. This action has led to the formation of the Occupational Violence Taskforce for our hospital and health service staff, and the Paramedic Safety Taskforce.

The Paramedic Safety Taskforce delivered its interim report at the end of January 2016 and has recommended a number of measures to help improve the safety of paramedics. These interim recommendations include enhanced situational awareness and safety training for all paramedics and a public awareness campaign, both of which are being fast-tracked.

All front-line ambulance staff will be undertaking the enhanced training which aims to mitigate the risks of violence by helping paramedics to identify, de-escalate and withdraw safely from potentially dangerous or confronting situations. The Palaszczuk Government is also implementing a \$1.35 million public awareness campaign 'Zero tolerance—no excuse for abuse', which is aimed at minimising violence against both paramedics and front-line healthcare workers.

There is absolutely no excuse for anyone to abuse or physically assault a healthcare worker. I urge the Queensland community to join together and show zero tolerance for this type of antisocial behaviour.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

CAMERON DICK MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services